THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN MANAGING AN INTEGRATED

COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH: OBSERVATIONS AT A SMALL DIGITAL

AGENCY

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by

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Chapter One: Introduction

Through my studies at the Missouri School of Journalism I was able to gain hands-on experience in areas such as PR, digital advertising, copywriting, social media, etc. I became a strong proponent of utilizing an integrated method and began to question why some agencies still lacked integration. I chose this project in the hopes that I would be able to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how agencies implement and manage integrated communications.

This project allowed me to gain experience working at an integrated agency. I was able to hone my skills through real-world application, as well as discover and develop new talents. This project fits with both my short-term and long-term career goals. Through completion of this project I was able to improve my skills and make valuable business contacts which will help me in my career going forward. It also gave me the opportunity to expand my knowledge of integrated communications through both primary and secondary research, which put me on a path to reach my long-term goal of being a thought leader in the field.

Chapter Two: Activity Log

Description of Activities

On January 18, 2015, I began an internship at Twist STL (http://www.twiststl.com/).

Twist was a fully integrated, mid-sized agency located in St. Louis, Missouri. According

to AgencyFinder.com, a mid-sized agency is one that has 10-75 employees (Advertising

Agency Definition and Description, 2015). Twist offered a variety of services including

brand management, design, digital, public relations, and social. These different

disciplines were integrated to create strong, consistent campaigns.

However, shortly after my internship began I was informed Twist STL had been bought

out. The agency transitioned from Twist STL to 10X Studios. 10X Studios remained in

the same office and offered the same services as Twist STL. While the two agencies were

very similar, multiple employees still decided to leave during the transition. This caused

some difficulties in my research, as there was less office activity to observe and fewer

interview candidates. Also, my research start date was pushed back since I had to

resubmit to the Institutional Review Board with the new agency name. Despite these

difficulties I was able to complete internship and research successfully.

As a brand management intern, I was told I'd be first and foremost a writer. I

would assist in writing web copy, e-newsletters, social media posts, ad copy and general

promotional copy. However, I'd be performing a variety of other tasks as well. I would

develop media materials, conduct media outreach, identify social media trends and build

client content calendars for Twitter and Facebook. I would compile clip books and media trackers of client media placements. Finally, I would conduct research on client's products, services, competitors and target markets.

The internship started off slowly. My supervisors did not want to overwhelm me right away, so I was introduced to new tasks gradually and was given plenty of time to spend on each one. While I appreciated being given so much time, the learning curve was not as steep as my supervisors anticipated so I often found myself with nothing to do. For example, I would be tasked with creating a content calendar for one of our clients and given three hours to complete it. If the calendar only took me an hour to create I would send it to my supervisors and then sit aimlessly while awaiting another task. This pace of work was too slow for my taste.

After a few weeks, my supervisors started giving me a heavier workload. Rather than receiving one task at a time I was assigned my own accounts and given the freedom to manage my tasks and deadlines. The more time I spent working, the faster and more confident I became.

By the end of the internship I was operating in two different roles. First, I was functioning as a brand manager. In this role I served my clients by creating and optimizing compelling content for their digital, print and social media campaigns. This included blog posts, social media content calendars and articles. I also assisted with planning events.

I also served as the unofficial SEO/SEM manager for the agency. In this role I was tasked with implementing, monitoring, analyzing and reporting on SEM programs for all of the agency's clients. This included pay-per-click ads, display ads and social media ads. I also provided search engine optimization guidance to drive organic traffic to the sites.

I will continue to work Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. until my internship end date on April 29, 2016.

Field Notes
Week 1 (January 19th – 22nd):

I was scheduled to begin at Twist with a two-hour orientation on Tuesday, January 19th. However, since it was snowing on Tuesday they told me they were going to try to keep it under an hour. I would be working from my personal laptop so I brought it to the orientation. Cindy Rolf, Twist's business operations manager, connected it to the Twist server. She also setup my Twist email, QuickBooks and Basecamp software.

My orientation took place at the back tables, one of three meeting areas in the Twist office. I was introduced to Alexis Lucente and Emily Uzzetta who would be directly supervising me during my time at Twist. We went through a brief orientation which covered office etiquette, my schedule, program practices, client overviews and possible tasks. I was sent home early, before the roads got too bad, and instructed to watch Basecamp video tutorials at home that night.

I spent the majority of the next three days creating social media content (Facebook and Twitter) for two of Twist's clients: Missouri Poison Center and The

Boulevard. After writing the content I would send it to either Alexis or Emily and they would return it with feedback. After two rounds of feedback and edits the content was ready to post. I scheduled the Facebook content using Facebook's built in management tool. I used Sprout Social to schedule the tweets.

Creating this content took much longer than I thought it would. I had to spend a lot of time looking at the clients' social media pages and past content calendars. I wanted to familiarize myself with the clients, their messages and the tones they use to make sure my content was consistent with what they had been posting. The most common feedback I received was to switch up the copy to eliminate redundancy of sentence structures.

I also spent a few hours on a media coverage sweep. Alexis asked me to compile a list of authors that covered topics like trips to St. Louis, traveling with family, hotels in St. Louis, etc. Again, this assignment took me longer than I thought it would. I was afraid to miss an author and afraid that I was somehow not doing the media sweep correctly, so I combed through the results more closely than necessary.

At the end of the day on Friday Emily had me login to QuickBooks Online Plus. She showed me how to correctly bill clients for the work I completed throughout the week.

Week 2 (January 25th – 29th):

I met with my supervisor early in the week to discuss a restaurant client, The Boundary. She told me that we would be planning and running a bloggers' dinner as part of The Boundary's soft opening. Twist will be inviting 10-15 highly influential bloggers to this event. Each blogger will be treated to a multi-course dinner with wine pairings at

Boundary and a complimentary night's stay at The Cheshire, a hotel in St. Louis and another of Twist's clients. In return, the bloggers will be required to live post their weekend experiences on social media and post a trip recap on their personal blogs. My first full week at Twist was mostly dedicated to preparing for this dinner. I began with blogger research, which took me about a day and a half. At the end of my research I had compiled a list of 20 key influencers. While many were from the St. Louis area there were also a few from key surrounding cities like Kansas City, Louisville, and Memphis. This research took a little longer for me to complete since I was not very familiar with Instagram and my supervisor wanted bloggers with large Instagram followings. By then end of the day, I felt much more comfortable searching through Instagram users and hashtags. I presented this list to my supervisor and after receiving her approval I spent another day drafting emails to send to each blogger inviting them to the dinner.

I spent a lot of time this week creating content. I wrote social media content (Facebook and Twitter) for multiple clients like The Boundary, Missouri Poison Control, etc. I also drafted up two blog posts for the Westport Plaza to add to the "News" section of their website. I sent this content to my supervisor for approval and it was returned with way fewer edits than last week. Most of the edits were small formatting changes. I quickly made the edits and then scheduled out the content using Sprout Social. Creating content was easier and faster this week since I was familiar with the tones used on the social media pages and I felt a lot more confident in what I wrote. I was excited to submit the blog posts to my supervisor since they were my first pieces of real writing here at Twist.

I received a little bit of training this week in the office. Alexis walked me through the basics of PR Newswire. PR Newswire is a tool practitioners use to deliver news releases directly to key audiences. Through this distribution service, PR practitioners have access to print and broadcast outlets, journalists, bloggers, financial portals, social media networks, websites and content syndication channels.

I also was called into a meeting with the VP of digital marketing. For two hours we discussed the different SEO campaigns that are currently running for various clients. She showed me the digital reports from 2015 and told me that, beginning in February, I will be responsible for creating the monthly reports for all clients. Each report is different as they are all individually catered to the clients' needs and goals. The monthly reports can consist of goal completion numbers, website traffic trends, crawl diagnostics, PPC campaign overviews, ad groups, ads, keyword trends, etc.

Week 3 (February 1st – 5th):

Most of week three was spent building SEO/SEM reports. These are done during the first week of every month with data from the previous month. I compiled reports for Devereaux Stokes, Cooperative Home Care, Henderson & Waterkotte, Century Securities, Westport Plaza and Missouri Poison Center. I utilized Google Analytics, Google AdWords, Moz, Twitter Analytics and Sprout Social.

At first it took hours just to do one report. I had to switch back and forth between the reporting tools trying to find the information I needed. After I completed two on my own, the reporting started to move a lot more quickly. I wrote a list for myself of which information could be found using each tool. For example: crawl diagnostics could be

found using Moz, but to see top visited pages I had to use Google Analytics. By the end of the second day I did not even need to use the list.

For my first round of reports, I simply updated the information from the previous month. I think that for my second round of reports, which I'll do the first week of March, I will be able to personalize each report a bit more. Now that I am more familiar with the tools and have started to develop a good understanding of the data I hope I can make each report more meaningful and relevant to the individual client. Rather than simply showing clients how their website and social media performed each month, I plan to pull key insights from the data so that I can make recommendations for improvement. 10X Studios can use this information to optimize the websites' content and improve SEO results for their clients.

This week Twist transitioned into 10x Studios. Twist's CEO, Craig Kaminer, decided to sell the agency due to health reasons. A former colleague of Craig's, Dan Curran, bought the agency with hopes to expand it. This change has been in the works since last June, but the official transition was delayed due to legal reasons. All Twist employees were informed of the move and many chose to leave the agency. However, those that remain seem very excited about the new direction the agency is headed. 10X Studios has begun actively recruiting and interviewing candidates, and is planning to hire between five and 10 new employees very soon. So far the changes have been minimal. Dan seems to be observing and trying to get his bearings before implementing any major changes.

The only changes so far have been technological ones. I had to setup a new email and basecamp. Twist used Outlook as its email service provider, but 10x Studios uses Google Email. This part of the transition was easy for me since I've had a personal Gmail account for years. However, many employees are struggling to understand this new email provider and are resisting the transition. Some are trying to link their new Gmail accounts back through Outlook, and some are just continuing to use their Outlook addresses.

In addition to the change to Google Email, we are transitioning to Google Docs. Google Docs is a cloud-based platform for creating, saving, and sharing documents. The Twist server will become read-only, and new documents will be saved to Google Docs. Again, using Google Docs is not an issue for me, but there are a lot of in-office grumblings about these changes. I believe they are planning a training session, but no date has been set.

Also, everyone in the office downloaded the messaging app Slack. We are going to begin using Slack to communicate with employees in the STL office and the Chicago office. While the St. Louis office will be 10X Studios' headquarters, there are currently more employees at the Chicago office. Using this app is supposed to help cut down on emails and create quick turnaround on simple requests and to-do's.

Week 4 (February 8th – 12th):

As part of this transition from Twist STL to 10X Studios we are switching to a new accounting system. Since the old system "hid" all of the credit card information for security purposes, I spent a large part of the week contacting clients to obtain their credit card info for entry into the new system. At first I was unhappy about being given this

task. It felt like busy work. However, after making a few calls I realized how inexperienced I was with talking to clients. I felt awkward and even a little nervous making the first few calls, but as I continued I became much more relaxed and competent. I think it was great practice and helped prepare me for any client-facing roles I may take after graduation.

I spent a few hours updating the Google Business pages for clients like Cooperative Home Care and Squire Investment Management Company. It was interesting to see the back-end of Google Business. I had never really given much thought to how businesses pop up when they are searched. Usually you don't even have to click on their website to see their address, phone number, hours of operation and location. Also, since one of our clients' Google Business pages was linked to the wrong URL I got to see first-hand the negative impact that not keeping your information updated can have. They had multiple people calling to tell them that their website was down and I'm sure they lost a few customers. I was able to update the link as well as the rest of their information.

I also got the opportunity to sit-in and listen to some blogger pitches. The brand managers were calling bloggers and local influencers to negotiate contracts for the upcoming blogger dinners at the Marriott St. Louis Grand and the Boundary. We contacted eight bloggers, and received positive responses from six of them. Four of those six bloggers are from St. Louis. One blogger is from Kansas City and one is from Memphis. The bloggers will be joined at the dinner by some of the Boundary team's personal contacts. They will receive complimentary meals, drinks and hotel rooms in exchange for posting about the food and service on their blogs and various social media

accounts. I think that the influence of bloggers and social media celebrities is only going to grow so forming and maintaining these blogger relationships will be vital.

This is not the first influencer event that 10X Studios has organized. Previously, 10X successfully organized a blogger dinner at the St. Louis Marriott Grand. The goal of these dinners is to generate buzz and excitement for the clients by utilizing the bloggers immense influence.

This week I was given my first assignment that involved using the back-end of WordPress. I was asked to update the "news" sections on the websites for The Boulevard and Devereaux, Stokes, Nolan, Fernandez & Leonard, P.C. This took me longer than usual since I have never really used WordPress. However, through a lot of trial and error I began to figure out how it works. It is very convenient that WordPress will analyze your posts for their SEO score. This allowed me to easily optimize my posts by following the tips given. I also used WordPress to fix some outbound links that were faulty.

Towards the end of the week, I sat down one-on-one with Lisa Grimm, the VP of digital marketing at 10X Studios. Lisa has been unsuccessfully searching for an SEO/SEM manager. During the first few weeks of my internship she gave me some digital tasks to try. Since I was able to successfully complete those, she asked to meet with me to discuss my interests in digital and the possibility of giving me more digital work. She asked me what I was interested in and what my career goals looked like. She said that if I were willing, she would like me to take on a bigger digital role. We discussed a lot of the different aspects of digital marketing, especially PPC vs. SEO. I told her that I think I have greater interest in SEO and we agreed that I would start

receiving more in-depth SEO training next week and eventually begin managing a few SEO campaigns. While I think that learning PPC would be interesting, I think I prefer the challenge of building traffic organically. It will be both challenging and fun to learn and experiment within SEO.

Week 5 (February 15th – 19th):

This week I continued working on tasks for the upcoming blogger dinner. First, Alexis showed me examples of media trackers and briefly explained how to create one. She asked me to build a media tracker for The Boundary. Basically, media trackers are used to keep tabs on media presence by consolidating coverage details. I gathered the publication date, outlet name, title, link (if available), unique visitors per month (UVPM)/circulation and impressions into an excel spreadsheet. I have created media trackers for other internships before so it was pretty easy and quick to do. The media trackers for my previous internship were fundamentally the same as this one. There were small differences in where we got the UVPM/Circulation numbers from, but the categories were the same.

I also spent some time editing the blogger contracts. The contracts needed to be personalized for each blogger. Bloggers that would be traveling from surrounding cities, like Kansas City and Memphis, would be receiving a complimentary hotel room. The local St. Louis bloggers would not be staying at the hotel, so their contracts were a little different. I then sent the contracts to all of the bloggers and created an Excel spreadsheet to track who had returned a signed contract, who had questions, who we were waiting to hear back from, etc. Since the bloggers were communicating with both Alexis and I, we

thought it was important to stay very organized and keep each other updated with the shared Excel sheets.

I received a crash course in removing malicious code when one of our client's websites was hacked. I spent a few hours in the backend of The Boulevard's website restoring posts that were altered to include advertisements and links to Viagra. Lisa explained to me that this website became a target for hackers because it was old and had not been updated in a long time. She had suggested a website overhaul to the client, but they did not want to spend money to update their site. I think this story will serve as a good example in the future when clients don't understand the importance of keeping their websites updated!

I spent a few hours updating the Cooperative Home Care website. I used WordPress to add in some February newsletters as well as a new blog post. I did not create any of this content. The newsletters I simply uploaded to the site. The blog post required more time since I optimized the content and added some relevant images before uploading it to the site. The images come from our "graphics" drive located on the old Twist server. We have a file of graphics for each client. I also made some small edits to the content of the website. For example: I changed the copy on the careers page from "29 years in 2015" to "30 years in 2016."

I like working in the backend of the websites. However, it is frustrating when the person who creates the content doesn't understand the basics of optimization. I am very new to SEO/SEM; however, the more I learn the more I realize that most content falls short. The content I am given for the Cooperative Home Care site comes from Karen

Bland, a contract-based brand manager. She writes a ton of content, but none of it will get credit from Google since it usually falls short of the length requirement, doesn't utilize keywords, contains no images or outbound links, etc. So no matter how much of this content is added to the site, their ranking in Google will not change. I think this gap between brand and digital is a huge drawback. Increasing communication between these two teams, or even cross training so that brand managers understand the basics of SEO would help strengthen campaigns.

For my clients, I get to create, optimize and post the content, which I hope help makes it stronger. For example, this week I had to write my two monthly blog posts for Westport Plaza. Rather than simply churning out content, I first logged into Google Analytics and Google AdWords and identified two keywords to build the content around, "small office space" and "rent office spaces." While they were hard keywords to write 300+ words about, creating content that utilized these keywords would effectively drive traffic to the site.

Finally, I spent a few hours creating the March content calendar for Missouri Poison Center. National Poison Prevention Week occurs in March so I built a lot of content around that. I sent the content calendar to Alexis for approval and she sent it along to the client, without asking me to make any edits.

Week 6 (February 22nd – 26th):

This week started off differently than any other. I spent all day Monday at one of our client's offices, the Missouri Poison Center. Alexis told me that some of the brochures we ordered for the Missouri Poison Center had arrived damaged from the

printer. I was supposed to go to the office, sort the brochures and bring back numbers on how many needed to be replaced. I was not excited about spending all day sorting through brochures, but I knew it was necessary work and I didn't want to complain. However, when I arrived at Missouri Poison I discovered that there were tens of thousands of brochures. They wanted me to look at every single brochure and put aside any that hadn't been perfectly folded. I knew that there was no way one person could complete this task in a day or even a week. I spent the day at the Missouri Poison Center and made it through as many as brochures as I could. I was more than a little upset that Alexis wanted me to spend so much time doing mindless work. I knew I wouldn't learn anything and wouldn't gather any good information for my project.

After I left the Missouri Poison Center on Monday, I called Alexis to report back on the brochure incident. I learned that Alexis had no idea there were so many brochures. The brand manager that usually owns the Missouri Poison Center account recently went on maternity leave and Alexis had just been handed the account. When she realized how big of a task it was she told me to just come back to the office and said she would handle the brochures. I learned that tasks like these are not uncommon for brand managers and other PR professionals. According to Alexis and Emily, issues frequently arise that have nothing to do with PR, but brand managers handle them anyway. It is important to keep clients happy and that often means going above and beyond to do what is necessary.

The rest of the week was spent doing what I consider to be my routine tasks. I updated some links and content on the Boulevard website, optimized and posted a blog to the Cooperative Home Care website, modified blogger contracts, and continuously

updated the Boundary media tracker. I am becoming a lot quicker and more confident with these tasks. Alexis and Emily mentioned that I should expect my workload to increase soon since I am becoming more efficient.

Last week, I created the March content calendar for the Missouri Poison Center. The content was returned to me with very little feedback. The only changes I needed to make were adding in some themed days for National Poison Prevention Week. I made the changes and scheduled out the content using Facebook and Sprout Social. I also created March content calendars for The Boulevard and The Meadows. I am having a lot more fun with these content calendars than I did at the beginning of my internship. When I first started creating them I relied heavily on using past calendars as an example. This month I tried to be very creative and fun with the content. I incorporated some popular social media trends such as "Damn Daniel" and the new Facebook reactions. I also began creating my own images using Photoshop and Canva, a graphic design software, rather than using the same stock images that have simply been recycled month after month.

My favorite part of this week was being asked to participate in multiple meetings. Early in the week, I created the PPC and social reports for the Little Fishes Swim School. I was really excited when Lisa invited me to join in when she met with them. I watched as Lisa and Emily presented the reports and talked through the key insights. It was interesting to see what kind of questions the client had and how everyone interacted.

I also participated in a kick-off meeting for The Meadows, an outdoor shopping center in St. Louis. The Meadows signed a project contract earlier this week. The project will last three months and include email, social and advertising campaigns. I will be

responsible for the social campaign so I participated in the meeting alongside Alexis, Lisa and the graphic designer, Kevin.

My last meeting took place on Friday. This one was just Lisa and I. We spent a few hours in the large conference room. She told me that over the next few months the digital team would be working to optimize the Devereaux, Stokes, Fernandez and Leonard, P.C. Spanish website. The website has a ton of content on it, but it still has an extremely low ranking in Google because the content is not optimized. She gave me a brief overview of how to efficiently go through the site and optimize the content. I am excited to finally be able to put my Spanish minor to good use. We also spent a good amount of time discussing other housekeeping information. She walked me through the time sheet reports and explained how they determine which areas are the most profitable and ensure they are not over servicing any clients. She took the time to explain how the budgets work, how the project management system works and the basic hierarchy of the office. I really appreciate how much time Lisa takes to make sure I am well informed and to train me. She has made it very clear that she wants me to consider taking the open SEO/SEM manager position when I graduate so I am sure that's why she goes out of her way to work with me.

Week 7 (February 29th – March 4th):

The majority of this week was spent building EOM (end of month) reports. For most of 10X Studios' clients I created an SEO and SEM report. For one client, Missouri Poison Center, I created an SEO, SEM and social report. Since this was my second round of EOM reports at 10X, I felt pretty confident and was able to find the correct data pretty quickly. The only thing that made the reports tricky was that each report was organized

differently and included different metrics. For example, the report for Westport Plaza showed how the website's impressions broke down by day of the week, but the report for Cooperative Home Care broke the impressions down even further to time of day. Lisa had previously told me she wanted to streamline the reports, but never had time. I made reorganizing the reports a priority this month. I think that having all of the reports consistent will make the process quicker in the coming months.

Working on the reports is really time consuming, but I enjoy it. I actually wish I had more time to spend exploring Google Analytics, Google AdWords and Moz. Each service provides a ton of data and I think I could pull a lot of great insights if I had the time to look and understand the information and make connections. Correctly utilizing the data from those services will lead to better campaigns that drive traffic and produce strong results for the client.

I also spent some time early in the week optimizing content on the Devereaux, Stokes, Fernandez and Leonard, P.C. Spanish website. I began optimizing this site last week and I will most likely continue working on it for a few hours a week every week until it is complete. There is a ton of content on the site so it is taking a long time to go through. While optimizing content for legal sites is not very different from optimizing other types of content, this project is harder since the content is all in Spanish. I speak and read Spanish pretty well, but it still makes the entire process more difficult. I'm hoping that once it has all been optimized the organic search results will reflect the hard work put in.

I optimized and published blog posts on the Cooperative Home Care website, the Devereaux, Stokes, Fernandez and Leonard, P.C. website (English version) and the Westport Plaza Leasing site. I have done so many of these that I have become very quick and efficient. It doesn't require much thought anymore unless a large part of blog post must be rewritten. I also finalized the March content calendars for The Boulevard and The Meadows and scheduled that content out.

Most of the time, I come into the office and work on my own now that I don't need as much direction, and I have my own clients and tasks so I don't wait around to be given something to do. However, I still work very closely with Alexis and Emily. We will often proofread each other's work or brainstorm together. For example, Alexis is about to begin work with a new client, The Marriott West Hotel. This is the second Marriott account she has. Alexis, Emily and I sat outside in 10X's courtyard and spent about an hour discussing what The Marriott West's goals were and some possible ideas that she could pitch at her first client meeting. I really enjoy these brainstorming meetings because Alexis and Emily both have a lot of experience. They often tell me about successful campaigns and events that they have done before to give me ideas. I also sat down with Alexis for a brief tutorial on how to launch an Instagram ad.

Week 8 (March 7th – 11th):

This was another busy week for me at 10X Studios. I spent Monday and Tuesday finishing up the February SEO/EOM reports, and Lisa invited me to join her when she met with clients to discuss them. We met with Cooperative Home Care and Devereauz, Stokes, Fernandez & Leonard, P.C. I really enjoy client meetings. I learn a lot from

listening to Lisa explain the significance of the data to the clients. Plus, being included in the meetings allowed me to take note of what the clients were interested in so that next month I can adjust what I include in the reports to better suit their goals.

I also met with Lisa individually for some PPC training. Together we wrote and created new PPC (pay-per-click) ads for Cooperative Home Care. The ads will begin running this month. Lisa explained that we'd actively track the impressions and ad clicks, and adjust the ads accordingly. She said that good digital managers are constantly competing against themselves - creating new ads to compete with their own top performing ads.

The next day, I was tasked to create PPC ads on my own. First, Alexis asked me to create eight new PPC ads for the Missouri Poison Center. She gave me a list of keywords that they wanted the ads to be built on such as mushrooms, Zika virus and spring allergies. However, when I began working on the ads I noticed there was not yet content on the Missouri Poison Center website that matched these keywords. I suggested to Alexis that we might wait on these ads until the Missouri Poison Center spring newsletter was uploaded to the website. If this newsletter contained good information on the Zika virus, spring allergies, etc., we could use it as a landing page for the ads. It would be more effective to send visitors directly to the newsletter when they clicked on the ads. Otherwise, a user would search "Zika virus" and be directed to a Missouri Poison Center webpage that wasn't relevant to the Zika virus and they would most likely immediately click away from the site. It's important to focus on gaining relevant clicks, not just a high volume.

I think this is another example of how the gap between digital and brand hurts campaigns. When users visit your site and immediately exit, that tells Google that your site is lacking good, helpful content. Then, they will show your site less and less in their search results. If I didn't happen to be working for both brand and digital then this would have slipped through the cracks. Alexis would have made these ads herself and they would have hurt the website's overall quality score.

Alexis agreed to wait on the Missouri Poison Center ads and instead instructed me to create PPC ads for The Meadows. This was easier to do since I was given more freedom with the ads. I selected my own keywords based on their past campaigns and individually chose landing pages that would be useful to people searching those keywords.

I also spent a lot of time this week on final preparation for the Boundary Influencer Event, which took place this Thursday. We had a blogger cancel at the last minute due to illness, but were able to replace them. I triple checked the contracts and hotel reservations to make sure that everything was in order. Alexis and I met all of the guests in the hotel lobby. We ran introductions and then joined all of the bloggers on a tour of The Cheshire hotel. After the tour was over we walked them over to The Boundary and introduced them to Chef Rex Hale who would be leading them through the 10-course dinner. Alexis and I left once everyone was settled in and we were confident it would run smoothly. It was really exciting to attend my first influencer event. I enjoyed talking to the bloggers and discussing why they started blogging and what their goals for their blogs were.

I worked on the Cooperative Home Care site quite a bit this week too. I went back and entered snippets of information above the link to each newsletter so that visitors would have incentive to click. I optimized and published a spring blog post, and added in two testimonials.

Finally, I spent an hour each day doing community management for the Missouri Poison Center and the Marriott St. Louis Grand. I spent 30 minutes a day engaging with each community, whether it was through re-tweeting a tweet, sharing a post on Facebook or commenting on a relevant article. I will continue with this community management every day, time permitting. The goal is to grow page likes, increase reach and increase engagement.

Week 9 (March 14th – 18th):

This week, I created the Missouri Poison search network ads that were postponed last week. I was given the freedom to determine which keywords would perform best and build the PPC campaign around those keywords. This, along with the PCC campaign I made for The Meadows last week, are my first attempts building my own campaigns from scratch. I am excited to track the activity and see how my ads perform. I plan to monitor the campaigns regularly and adjust ad spend and keywords as needed.

It is a little scary to know that the work I'm doing is for a real client and that I will be held accountable. If I mess up I could blow their PPC budget for the month. Then, when I create the reports I will have to explain to the client why their clicks decreased, and where their money went. I almost expected to start by creating a practice PPC

campaign for an imaginary client, or at least to have the VP of digital check my campaign before I launched it. I guess learning by doing is the best way to learn!

I also spent a lot of time this week preparing for an upcoming event at the St. Louis Marriott West. The hotel is currently undergoing a multi-million dollar renovation. They plan to hold a grand re-opening event at the end of May. Alexis and I will be responsible for this event. This week we spent a lot of time brainstorming themes and possible entertainment ideas for each theme to present to the client. After the initial presentation, the client chose to move forward with a Mad Men-themed party. Alexis then put me in charge of planning out the entertainment. I researched different entertainment options and contacted multiple vendors, performers, musicians, etc. to get preliminary quotes. I organized all of the options, along with their prices into a spreadsheet to present to the client next week.

I created a presentation recapping everything 10X Studios did on behalf of The Boundary to be shared with the client. The Boundary is not a long-term client, they signed on for a three-month project surrounding the restaurant opening and the project is now ending. I put together a presentation that showcases all of their media placements (paid and earned) as well as the results of the influencer dinner. I also included a "next steps" slide that shows how they could benefit from continuing to work with 10X. Alexis hopes to convince them to make 10X their agency of record.

I also completed my usual weekly tasks. I did daily community management for the Missouri Poison Center, Marriott St. Louis Grand, The Boulevard and The Meadows.

I optimized and posted multiple blog posts for Cooperative Home Care and optimized some pages on the Devereaux, Stokes, Nolan, Fernandez & Leonard, P.C. Spanish site.

Week 10 (March 21st – 24th):

This week I was given the opportunity to attend a commercial shoot. 10X Studios was creating a series of TV commercials for one of its clients, Rotter Pest & Lawn Solutions. Lisa was overseeing the commercial and invited me to observe. The shoot lasted a full day and was very successful. The commercial was supposed to be informative and feel more like a journalistic piece than a paid advertisement. The commercial was shot from multiple angles and used an interview format. The viewers will be able to see some lights and cameras in the shot, which will give it a behind the scenes feel. It was interesting to watch and see what the video crew looked for in a good take. They were very specific in how the lines were delivered in order to make it sound authentic and unscripted.

10X Studios does not shoot commercials frequently, so there are no scriptwriters or videographers on staff. However, if any client ever wants to shoot a commercial then 10X will contract out to get it done. For this commercial, Lisa came up with the concept and then hired a freelance scriptwriter and a camera team. I asked her why, as VP of digital, overseeing the commercial fell to her. She explained that she stepped up because she works more closely with that particular client than anyone else at 10X. I do not know if I will ever need to create a commercial in my career, but it is great to have the chance to learn and observe either way.

One day I got to go with the other brand managers and the art director to meet with a new printer. I am not certain why 10X is looking for a new printer, but it may have something to do with the brochure mishap last month. We visited Swift Print Communications to discuss some upcoming projects and tour the printing facilities. I really enjoyed the tour. It was fun to see how different things were printed and learn what the options we had for printing. I was shocked by how huge the facilities were. We also sat down and had lunch with the VP of Display & Graphics at Swift. He showed us a lot of unique printing jobs he had done for other clients and walked us through the different types of materials we could print on.

I also had a meeting with Lisa to discuss an upcoming SEO project. I would be tasked with optimizing all of the pages on the Henderson & Waterkotte website. Henderson & Waterkotte are criminal defense lawyers that recently signed with 10X Studios. This was going to be a huge undertaking, so Lisa wanted to touch base and make sure I understood the project. We walked through the first page together and then I was told to move forward with the project on my own schedule.

I spent a lot of time this week creating content. I built the April social media calendars for the Missouri Poison Center, The Meadows and The Boulevard. I also drafted two blog posts for Westport Plaza. I had a lot of fun creating the social media content this month. I have become a lot more efficient with content creation. The same tasks that used to take me hours at the beginning of my internship now take less than half the time.

I optimized and posted a blog piece to the Cooperative Home Care website and did community management for Missouri Poison Center, The Meadows, The Boulevard and The St. Louis Marriot Grand. I optimized pages on the Devereaux, Stokes, Nolan, Fernandez & Leonard PC Spanish site and made a list of pages that still needed to be translated.

Chapter Three: Evaluation

Work Project

The quality of my work product improved as the internship progressed. In the beginning I did not feel completely confident when creating content because I did not know what was expected. For example, when building social media content calendars for the first time I relied heavily on using past calendars as a guideline. I did not know how far I could branch out or how much freedom I had to be creative. These first calendars went through multiple rounds of edits before they were ready to be published.

Fortunately, my supervisors provided great feedback and I was able to learn with each task. As the internship progressed, both my abilities and my confidence grew. The quality of my work improved and I was able to produce web-ready content that was creative while still keeping the voice of the client consistent.

As my capabilities extended past brand, the same learning curve applied. With the first round of SEO/SEM reports, I used the previous month's reports as a guide and simply updated the data. With each subsequent round of reports, I added more of a personal touch. I was able to individualize each report to best need the client's need.

What I Have Learned

I have learned a lot from this project. As previously mentioned, I learned valuable new skills including, but not limited to, social media writing, content optimization and SEO/SEM management. I learned how commercials are filmed and what the editing

process looks like. During my time at 10X Studios, I learned how to interact with clients, coworkers and managers in a friendly yet business-like manner. I learned how a fast-paced agency works and how to prioritize tasks based on immediate need. I also learned that when you work at a small agency you must be willing to do whatever is needed such as sort through brochures or make phone calls to gather billing information.

Chapter Four: Physical Evidence

Social Media Content Writing Examples

A

B

The Boulevard – Social Media Content (January)

Facebook – Relax the back

@Relax The Back - Clayton talks to FOX 2's @JohnFOXPertzborn and @KimHudsonJournalist about Healthy Sleep and Back Support while trying out some amazing products. Check it out! http://bit.ly/1ZWPkOE

Twitter – Relax the back

FOX 2's @PERTZFOX and @kimhudsontv tested out some amazing products from @RelaxTheBack! Check it out: http://bit.ly/1ZWPkOE

Facebook – Great Wall of Chocolate

Indulge in a @P.F. Chang's tradition – the Great Wall of Chocolate! With 6 rich layers of frosted chocolate cake topped with semi-sweet chocolate chips its perfect for sharing! Of course, we'd understand if you wanted to keep it all to yourself.

C

build up. (Link: http://bit.ly/23fnth8)

- February 11: Toddlers will taste test anything, and we mean ANYTHING. We have heard it all Don't panic, wipe their mouths out, and call us 800-222-1222 (Image: Nurses 3)

- February 12: 2 weeks left to submit to the #PoisonPreventionWeek poster contest! ALL entries will receive a gift. For more info visit: (Link: XXX)

- February 13: Weekend cleaning warriors: DO NOT mix household cleaners, it could result in toxic fumes! Keep cleaning and call us if you have any questions. 800-222-1222 (Image: Cleaning Supplies)

- February 15: Safety tip: Keep medicines up and away and out of sight! #poisonprevention (Image: put pills up)

- February 17: "Contact a poison control center" appears on lots of labels, but do you know the number? 800-222-1222 #WellnessWednesday (Image: toothpaste warning label))

- February 19: Child-resistant does NOT mean child-proof. Layer the protection: re-seal and lock up, out of sight & reach! (Image: child with pills)

- February 19: 1 week left to submit #PoisonPreventionWeek posters! Don't miss out on an opportunity to win! For more info check out: (Link: XXX)

- February 22: Poison prevention isn't just for little ones! Teens are at greater risk for serious outcomes related to medicine poisonings. (Image: teens)

- February 25; #ThrowBackThursday The Parent's Pledge, great advice from yesteryear, still holds true today but now we have the poison hotline to help!
  (Image: Parent's Pledge Clipping) - do we have a better photo of this, Peggy?

- February 26: Today is the last day to submit #PoisonPreventionWeek posters! We can't wait to see all the great posters! For more info visit: (Link: XXX)

- February 27: Did you make a mistake with your medicine today? We call that a "medication misadventure," you call that "time to call the poison center." (Image: iphone)

> Cosette Dw..., 1/21/2016 2:55 PM ✅ ✖
> **Deleted:** run your car even with the garage doors open! Normal air circulation won't provide enough fresh air to prevent carbon monoxide build up. (Link: http://bit.ly/23fnth8)

> Cosette Dw..., 1/21/2016 2:57 PM ✅ ✖
> **Deleted:** it comes to poison prevention, child-resistant is NOT child-proof. Layer the protection: re-seal and lock up, out of sight and reach! (Image: child with pills)

> Cosette Dw..., 1/21/2016 2:59 PM ✅ ✖
> **Formatted:** Font:Bold

D

March 20th: Today is the day! Let us know what you're doing to prevent poisonings in your home! #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON (Image: National Poison Prevention Week)

March 21st: It takes only seconds for a child to grab something dangerous. Be prepared! 1.800.222.1222 #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON (image: children act fast so do poisons infographic)

March 22nd: Poison centers save you time AND money! #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON (image: value of poison centers infographic)

March 23rd: Poisonings can happen to anyone, anywhere, any time! Keep you & your loved ones poison-free! #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON
(Image: Poison spans a lifetime infographic)

March 24th: 91% of poisonings occur at home! Follow these steps to ensure that your home is poison safe! #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON (image: is your home poison safe infographic)

March 25th: Medication errors can occur at any age! Everyone needs to be aware of proper medicine safety! #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON (image: aisle)

March 26th: The last day of National #PoisonPreventionWeek doesn't mean the fight against poison ends! #NPPW16 #PREVENTPOISON (image: help line)

March 29th: No medication disposal program available in your area? No problem! Just follow these tips: http://bit.ly/1CEcsK4 (Image: disposing meds)

Images

Value of Poison   congratulations   disposing meds.jpg   Winners are..   help line.jpg   mother-child-on-phone   Children Act Fast

E

Missouri Poison Center | Content Calendar | March 1 – March 31

Facebook

March 1st: Did you know we have free downloadable resources to learn and teach about poison safety? Check out our free programs for preschoolers all the way up to teens and senior citizens! (Link: http://bit.ly/19AT8Sd)

March 3rd: Stay tuned! We will be announcing the winners of the #PoisonPreventionWeek Poster Contest in one week! (Image: Winners Are..)

March 5th: Here are some of the amazing posters we received. Be sure to check them out and like your favorites! (image: attach pictures of posters)

March 6th: National #PoisonPreventionWeek is only two weeks away! We can't wait J (Image: Two Weeks To Go!)

March 8th: Program the Poison Helpline into your phone so you are prepared in the event of a poison incidence. Keep us on speed dial! 1.800.222.1222 (Image: mother-child-on-phone)

March 10th: We are so excited to announce the winners of the #PoisonPreventionWeek Poster Contest! (add info when available) (image: congratulations)

March 13th: National #PoisonPreventionWeek is only one week away! If you are interested in participating in a poison prevention event give us a call. 1.800.222.1222. (image: One Week Away!)

March 16th: We can't wait to see all of you this afternoon at our Winner's Ceremony! (provide details on ceremony?) (Image: trophy)

F

The Boulevard | Content Calendar | March

Facebook:

March 4: What is your #reaction to this outfit from @LaurieSoletBoutique? We were thinking, 'wow!' (Image: take from their Facebook or take in store?)

March 8: Happy #InternationalWomensDay! We celebrate you, today and every day! (Image: she laughs)

March 10: Make sure you stop by @AccessorizeUSA to stock up on everything green! St. Patrick's Day is only one week away! (Image: Green accessories)

March 13: Losing an hour of sleep is the worst! But being able to 'spring forward' with a new watch from @Jared The Galleria Of Jewelry will help ease your pain ☺ (Image: watch from Jared's)

March 16: Spring is almost here! Which of these spring fashion trends are you dying to try? Head to The Boulevard and let us help you perfect your spring wardrobe! (Link: http://bit.ly/21o19n7)

March 17: You don't need a pot of gold to shop these amazing dresses from @Brides by Demetrios! (Image: from Demetrios site?)

March 20: Spring is a time of growth, renewal and beauty. Celebrate the first day of spring and renew your closet with some of our favorite looks from @SoftSurroundings. (Image:)

March 24: Stop by @NadozCafe for some decadent deserts – a perfect addition to any Easter Basket! (Image:)

March 27: Happy Easter from all of us here at The Boulevard! (Image:)

March 30: Have you been to the new @ErdosAtHome yet?? Swing by and check out the amazing selection! (Image: pictures from website)

Twitter:

March 4: It's date night! Which outfit from @LaurieSoletBoutique would you pick? (Images: 2 outfits from store)

March 8: Happy #InternationalWomensDay! We celebrate you, today and every day! (Image: she laughs)

G

Cheeseburgers!! (image: thank you Thursdays)

March 4: This weekend only receive a gift with any full price Juniors or Missy swimsuit purchase! Head to VonMaur for the perfectly suited swimwear event! (image: make a splash)

March 8: Happy #InternationalWomensDay! Celebrate the strong and empowering women in your life! Here are 30 inspiring quotes that make us proud to be women: (link: http://bit.ly/1AesA56)

March 10: St. Patrick's Day is only 1 week away! Stop by @CharmingCharlie and stock up on everything green! (Image: green access)

March 12: They may not be walking the red carpet at the #KidsChoiceAwards tonight but with new looks from @Gymboree and @TheChildren'sPlace your kid can still look and feel like a star! (image: kids choice)

March 13: 'Spring Forward' in style with these fun accessories from @Claires. Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour! #DaylightSavingsTime (Image: claire's spring)

March 15: Get ready to Hop to the Meadows! This Saturday from 10AM-12PM we will have pony rides, face painting, inflatables and an Easter egg hunt. Rumor has it the Easter Bunny may even be hopping around! (Image: hop to the meadows)

March 16: Spring is just around the corner! What #SpringFashion trends are you eager to try? (Image: spring fashion)

March 17: Happy St. Patrick's Day! These new outfits from @NewYork&Company definitely have us feeling lucky! (Image: NY 1 + NY 2)

March 19: Hop to the Meadows and meet the Easter Bunny! From 10AM-12PM today we will have inflatables, balloon artists, face painting, pony rides and an Easter egg hunt! (Image: hop to the meadows)

March 23: Spring fashion has never looked this adorable! @Sebastien's Pet Salon is here to help your pup get runway-ready! (Link: http://bit.ly/1RfwYE4)

H

The Boulevard | Content Calendar | February

Facebook:

February 3rd: Planning a Super Bowl party? Choose from a large variety of @Nadoz party trays and have them delivered to your door! BBQ meatballs, chicken tenders, sandwiches and more! Order online: (Link: http://bit.ly/1ne066Q)

February 5th: Love and big savings are in the air! Schedule your session @PortraitInnovations in The Boulevard and take advantage of this Valentine's Day treat! (Link: http://bit.ly/1WBla3q)

February 8th: Happy Chinese New Year! Celebrate tonight with a Vino van Gogh painting party at @P.F. Chang's! While you're there take advantage of happy hour with incredible drink specials and delicious food items. (link: http://bit.ly/1T6mhsf)

February 9th: Want to surprise your special someone with a gift they'll never forget? Visit @JaredGalleriaofJewelry and check out the Jared Valentine's Day Gift Guide! (Image: Jared Heart)

February 11th: Love is in the air at @MaggianosLittleItalyStLouis! *(More information about the special of the month?) (Image:)*

February 12th: Calling all brides! You may just find THE dress this weekend at Demetrios! Explore all the newest bridal collections at the Valentine's/President's Weekend Event! Now through Sunday. (Image: Demet gown)

February 12th: Make sure to visit @Soft Surroundings at The Boulevard to get a FREE GIFT with any 2 full-priced lip product purchases. Now through Sunday! (Image: soft surr ?? find a better image)

February 13th : Is your Valentine's Day look missing something? Visit @Accessorize at The Boulevard to find the perfect finishing touches! (Image: Acccess)

February 14th: Happy Valentine's Day from all of us at The Boulevard <3! (Image: vday)

February 16th: Cold weather got you down? Visit @MitchellJamesSalon and treat yourself to a mani & pedi! (Image: Mitchell salon)

I

Missouri Poison Center | Content Calendar | April 1 – April 30

Facebook

April 1: Poison Prevention is no joke! Program the Poison Helpline into your phone so you are prepared in the event of a poison incidence. 1.800.222.1222 #AprilFoolsDay (Image: help line)

April 3: Learning about poison safety can be fun! Print out our activity sheets for kids and learn more about poison safety. (Link: http://bit.ly/1BJXCh9) (Image: Maze)

April 5: Calling all grandparents! Is your home safe from poisoning? Keep your kids and grandkids safe from your medication. (Image: Grandparents)

April 7: What should you expect when you call the Poison Center? Our staff will ask you a number of questions to help determine if a poisoning danger exists and to aid in the treatment. Learn more: (Link: http://bit.ly/1pFv0qw)

April 9: Don't try to guess whether something is poisonous. Don't wait to see if symptoms start. Help is a phone call away and our specialists are waiting! 1.800.222.1222 (Image: nurse)

April 11: There are 2 species of poisonous spiders in Missouri - the black widow and the brown recluse. Learn how to recognize these spiders and avoid being bitten: (Link: http://bit.ly/21DL6fS)

April 13: #WellnessWednesday - Education is prevention! Talk to teens about the dangers of inhalants today! For more info, follow our tips http://bit.ly/1MoLuwn #keepkidssafe (Image: inhalants)

April 15: Children are curious by nature. Never call medicine candy in order for them to take it. Make sure your children know what medicine is and why you must be the one to give it to them #ChildrensHealth (Image: Mom and Daughter)

April 17: As the weather gets warmer snakes will begin coming out of their dens. Check out our tips to avoid snakebites and more PoisonSafe Practices! (Link: http://bit.ly/1WD11cY)

April 19: There are 4 different routes of poisoning that can occur – inhaled, skin, eye and swallowed. Do you know the appropriate first aid steps for each? Learn more: (link: http://bit.ly/1CQCSuB)

April 21: Do you have questions? Not sure if it's an emergency? When in doubt, check it out! Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222. (Image: help line)

J

The Boulevard | Content Calendar | April

Facebook:

April 1: Eye care is no joke! Optometrists recommend that most people get their eyes tested every 2 years. Make an appointment at @Eye Care Associates of St. Louis today! (Image: eyecare)

April 3: @FITNESS Magazine thinks every runner should start taking bar classes. Sign up for classes at @The Bar Method St. Louis and find out why! (Link: http://bit.ly/1SdCNCp)

April 5: Our zero gravity chairs will leave you feeling stress-free! Stop by @Relax the Back and talk to one of our trained staff members today! #StressAwarenessMonth (Image: zero gravity)

April 7: Its #ThrowbackThursday but this throwback fashion is making a comeback! Shop flare jeans at @The Loft! (Image: flare jeans)

April 9: Patio season is calling. Give your patio a makeover with a trip to @Crate and Barrel! (Image: outdoor furniture)

April 11: Your mornings just got better! @Nadoz Café has partnered with @Kaldi's Coffee Roasting Co. Come in and try out this incredible pairing. We serve breakfast all day! (Image: Kaldi partner)

April 13: To celebrate Graduates and Rising Seniors, @Portrait Innovations is offering 10% off! Call to schedule your appointment today! (314) 863-0233 (Image: grad coupon)

April 15: Unwind from a long week with a deep tissue massage at @ Mitchell James Salon! (Image: massage bed)

April 17: Celebrate your day in style, be a Demetrios Bride! Call now to book your bridal appointment. We can't wait to help you find the gown of your dreams! @Brides by Demetrios St. Louis, (314) 721-7400 (Image: demet bride)

April 19: @PF Chang's Jicama Street Tacos and Agave Margaritas are the perfect combination! #TacoTuesday #TequilaTuesday (Image: tacos)

April 21: We are crazy for all things floral! Add a burst of color to your wardrobe with new items from @Accessorize and @Laurie Solet! (Image: floral)

April 23: Double Chocolate Brownie or New York Style Cheesecake? Get both! Try up to 10 different dishes when you dine family-style at @Maggiano's Little Italy! (Image: magg's family style)

K

The Meadows | Content Calendar | April

Facebook:

April 1: Refresh your white dress with help from @Francesca's. (Link: http://bit.ly/1pJXuQ7) (Image: white dress)

April 3: Have you tried the new Citrus Salad with Gremolata Crusted Warm Goat Cheese at @BC's Kitchen?? If not, visit us at The Meadows today! #springsalad (Image: citrus salad)

April 5: We are LOVING these Ralph by Ralph Lauren glasses for spring! The perfect balance of fun and sophisticated! @LensCrafters (Image: Lens crafters)

April 7: Now through April 14th you can spend your @Old Navy Super Cash on the latest and greatest styles! (Image: old navy)

April 9: The Spring Garden Gnome Run is only 1 week away! Join The @Western St. Charles County Chamber of Commerce next Saturday (April 16th) at 8:30 am! Walkers are encouraged to come out too ☺ (link: http://bit.ly/1q2Mihf)

April 11: Lose the #MondayBlues and instead pick up some #GoodVibes from @Victoria Secret! (Image: Good vibes)

April 13: Tomorrow is the last day to redeem your Super Cash! Visit @Old Navy to shop the latest and greatest styles! (Image: Old Navy)

April 15: On your mark, get set, GO! The @Western St. Charles County Chamber of Commerce annual 5k run is tomorrow morning at 8:30! Walkers are encouraged to come out too ☺ (Image: Commerce 5k)

April 17: Are you ready to Run for Their Lives?! Next Saturday (April 23rd) at 9:00am you can join in on the 5k Race or the 1 mile Fun Run! Get more info here: (Link: http://bit.ly/1LHLWqh)

April 19: Have some fun this spring with these awesome patterns! Stop into @Jos. A. Bank today! (link: http://bit.ly/1Zu14d5) (Image: Jos A)

April 21: It's Thank You Thursday at @Max & Erma's! Make sure you stop in for your $5 Cheeseburger! (Image: thank you Thursdays)

April 23: We hope to see you all at Birthright of Wentzville today at 9am! Through your involvement in "Run for Their Lives" you are directly saving lives in your community! (Image: birthright)

Media Trackers

A

	NAME OF PUBLICATION	DATE PUBLISHED	TITLE OF PIECE	AUTHOR	LINK TO STORY	SUMMARY
Trips to STL						
	Examiner	4-Mar-15	Top 15 Things St. Louisans Take For Granted	Lauren Haas	aminer.com/list/top-15-things-st-louisans-ta	List of 15 St. Louis things the auth
	Examiner	30-May-14	Top 10 places to delight young children in St	Lauren Haas	iner.com/list/top-10-places-to-delight-youn	10 attractions perfect for toddlers,
	CBS St. Louis - Travel & Outdoors	29-Jun-13	Top Day Trips For Under $100 In The St. Lou	Lauren Haas	it.com/top-lists/top-day-trips-for-under-100	A wide variety of ideas for day trip
			Multiple articles on STL trips	Lauren Haas	w.examiner.com/sightseeing-1-in-st-louis/lauren-haas	
	AOL Travel	30-Aug-10	Happy Hour in St. Louis	Evan C Jones	travel.aol.com/2010/08/30/happy-hour-in-s	8 of the author's favorite happy ho
	AOL Travel	25-Aug-10	5 Best Photo Opportunities in St. Louis	Evan C Jones	el.aol.com/2010/08/25/5-best-photo-ops-	A brief list of places for great phot
	AOL Travel	25-Aug-10	St. Louis with Teens	Victoria Ross	s.travel.aol.com/2010/08/25/st-louis-with-t	This articles breaks down morning
	The New York Times - Escapes	8-Feb-08	Side Trips in St. Louis: A Holiday for Eccentri	Henry Fountain	nytimes.com/2008/02/08/travel/escapes/08/	attractions St. Louis offers. EX: C
	The New York Times - Travel	2-Oct-05	In St. Louis, Old Warehouses, New Promise	Lucy Ferriss	m/2005/10/02/travel/in-st-louis-old-warehot	also briefly highlights other area a
Traveling w/ the Family						
	HuffPost	14-Jan-16	n Family Travel From The New York Times Tr	Dave Parfitt	rfitt/5-trends-in-family-travel-from-the-new/it the 2016 NY Times Travel Show. I
	The New York Times - Travel	30-Apr-15	Family-Friendly Travel Ideas to Get You Goi	Elaine Glusac	iew/2015/04/25/travel/20-family-friendly-T	ned to appeal to a wide range of tr
	Travel & Leisure	22-Aug-14	Top Family Travel Tips from the Experts	Clara Sedlak	landleisure.com/blogs/top-family-travel-tips	r favorite tips on how to make trav
	Lonely Planet	20-Aug-14	How to pack for travel with kids	Jennifer Denniston	/best-of-family-travel/content/travel-tips-an	family trips. Includes "rest or pas
	USA Today	18-Nov-13	Family travel: Tips for road trips with kids	Candyce H. Stapen	/travel/destinations/2013/11/18/family-travlers, grade-schoolers, and tweens
	Travel Channel		Summer Hall's Tips for Family Travel	Lisa Singh	nel.com/interests/family/articles/summer-hemvpoints.com, discusses the travel
Traveling to STL						

B

Boundary Media Tracker

OUTLET TYPE	DATE	OUTLET NAME	TITLE	LINK	UVPM/CIRCULATION	IMPRESSIONS
ONLINE						
	2/7/2016	St. Louis Magazine	Sneak Peek: Boundary at The Cheshire	http://www.stlmag.com/dining/sneak-peek-boundary-at-the-cheshire/	99,967	24,991
	2/8/2016	ALIVE	A First Look At Boundary At The Cheshire	http://www.alivemag.com/blog/index.php/2016/02/a-first-look-at-boundary-at-the-cheshire/	80,812	20,202
	2/8/2016	RiverFront Times	Boundary Brings Eclectic Eats to the Cheshire Hotel	http://www.riverfronttimes.com/foodblog/2016/02/08/boundary-brings-eclectic-eats-to-the-cheshire-hotel	157,237	38,309
	2/8/2016	Sauce Magazine	First Look: Boundary	http://www.saucemagazine.com/blog/?tag=the-restaurant-at-the-cheshire	66,951	16,737
	2/9/2016	St. Louis Business Journal	New restaurant opens at Cheshire inn - 5 things you don't need to know but mi	http://www.bizjournals.com/stlouis/morning_call/2016/02/new-restaurant-opens-at-cheshire-inn-5-things-you.html	6,724	1,681
	2/8/2016	FEAST	Sneak Peek: Boundary Opens Tonight at the Cheshire Inn	http://www.feastmagazine.com/the-feed/st_louis_news/article_8d80f626-cc51-11e5-a684-29a1b4d3a33c.html	80,362	20,090
ONLINE TOTAL					411,690	102,920
PRINT						
	2/17/2016 - 2/23/	RiverFront Times	Boundary Comes to the Cheshire Hotel		30,000	130,000
TV						
	2/23/2016	KPLR 11	New restaurant opens at The Cheshire on Clayton	http://kplr11.com/2016/02/23/new-restaurant-o	40,000	40,000
	2/23/2016	Fox 2	New restaurant 'Boundary' open at The Cheshire Inn	http://fox2now.com/2016/02/23/new-restaurant	40,000	40,000

Influencer Research
A

Nashville Influencers:

Darling Darlings

darling.darlings [FOLLOW] •••

KENDALL Lifestyle Blog | Nashville Lover of people, life, and JESUS
kendall@darlingdarlings.com | ddarlings www.darlingdarlings.com

807 posts   13k followers   1,800 following

Contact Information: http://littlewebwritinghoodblog.com/kendall/contact/ OR
kendall@darlingdarlings.com

Blog
  • Impressions: 5,000
Instagram
  • 13,000 followers
Facebook
  • 318 likes
Pinterest
  • 1,300 followers
Twitter
  • 60 followers

Notes: Her blog was just created in January so it is very new. Her social media
accounts (especially instagram and pinterest) are really popular and active.

B
Bl

Louisville Influencers:

Chelsea Tate

chelceytate FOLLOW ...

Chelcey Tate Lifestyle Blogger + Hand Letterer Wife | Artist | Believer | Adventurer
Louisville, KY hello@chelceytate.com www.chelceytate.com

785 posts   2,017 followers   502 following

Contact information: hello@chelceytate.com OR
http://www.chelceytate.com/contact/

Blog
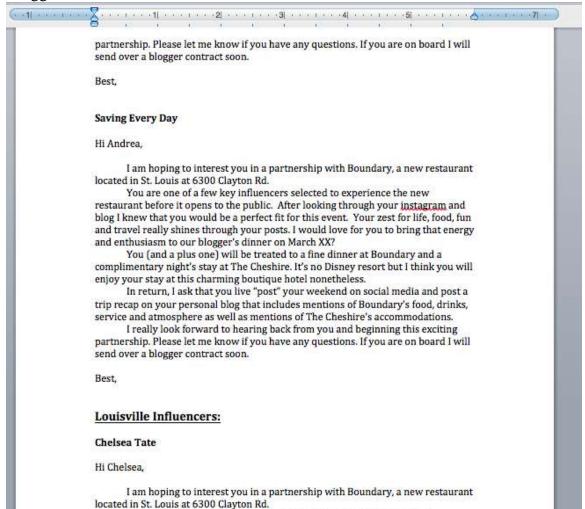- Impressions: 5,000

Instagram
- 2,017 followers

Twitter
- 784

Facebook
- 965 likes

Notes: She posts food on her Instagram a lot – only a few actually include the name of the restaurant in the post. She is married, could be motivated to come if she can bring her husband with her

Blogger Invites

partnership. Please let me know if you have any questions. If you are on board I will send over a blogger contract soon.

Best,

Saving Every Day

Hi Andrea,

I am hoping to interest you in a partnership with Boundary, a new restaurant located in St. Louis at 6300 Clayton Rd.

You are one of a few key influencers selected to experience the new restaurant before it opens to the public. After looking through your instagram and blog I knew that you would be a perfect fit for this event. Your zest for life, food, fun and travel really shines through your posts. I would love for you to bring that energy and enthusiasm to our blogger's dinner on March XX?

You (and a plus one) will be treated to a fine dinner at Boundary and a complimentary night's stay at The Cheshire. It's no Disney resort but I think you will enjoy your stay at this charming boutique hotel nonetheless.

In return, I ask that you live "post" your weekend on social media and post a trip recap on your personal blog that includes mentions of Boundary's food, drinks, service and atmosphere as well as mentions of The Cheshire's accommodations.

I really look forward to hearing back from you and beginning this exciting partnership. Please let me know if you have any questions. If you are on board I will send over a blogger contract soon.

Best,

Louisville Influencers:

Chelsea Tate

Hi Chelsea,

I am hoping to interest you in a partnership with Boundary, a new restaurant located in St. Louis at 6300 Clayton Rd.

You are one of a few key influencers selected to experience the new

Influencer Dinner Report

Blogs Content Writing
A

The #1 Mistake Tenants Make - And How To Avoid It

Michael Bull, CCIM is an active commercial real estate advisor and host of the nationally syndicated Commercial Real Estate Show. When asked, "What is the biggest mistake for a tenant leasing office space to avoid?" He answered, "The biggest mistake is timing." Michael advises that tenants start looking for office space as early as possible.

Maybe your business is outgrowing your current office space. Maybe you want to move to a more convenient location. Maybe you want to upgrade to an office that will impress your clients. Whatever the reason, if you are considering leasing a new office space the time to start is now.

Tenants tend to drastically underestimate the time it takes to lease and move into a new office space. Don't let that happen to you. Contact a Westport Plaza leasing agent today and get the ball rolling!

Our leasing agents will help you determine which of our available spaces best meets the needs of your business and guide you through the leasing process. This way, when the time comes to move your business, the only thing you'll have to do is decide which of Westport's amazing on-site dining locations you want to try out first.

Location Is Key

Choosing an office space can be a daunting task as there are countless factors to consider. Most attention is given to price and square feet, which causes other factors to fall by the wayside. There is one factor; however, that entrepreneurs cannot afford to overlook – location. The wrong office location can cost a company in many ways.

When choosing an office space its important to consider your employees. A long, pricey commute may motive employees to seek hire elsewhere. You can avoid this issue by choosing an office space that is conveniently located. Westport Plaza, located near the intersection of I-270 and Page Avenue in Maryland Heights, is easily reached from all parts of St. Louis and St. Charles County.

You also want to find an office location that is easily accessible to your clients. As transportation costs continue to rise clients will be less willing to drive out to your office, especially if they have to rent a car. Westport Plaza is just minutes from Lambert-St. Louis International Airport and offers free airport shuttles to ensure that your clients' travels will be quick and hassle-free.

Lastly, you should keep in mind what else the location has to offer. You don't want to lease an office space in the middle of nowhere. When you only have 30 minutes for your lunch break you can't spend 15 of those minutes driving to the nearest restaurant. At Westport Plaza everything you need is at your fingertips. Two newly renovated Sheraton hotels, a newly renovated fitness center and several on-

B

3 Tips for Organizing Your Small Office Space

Small businesses already face a lot of big obstacles. Don't let organization be one of them. Here are 3 simple tips for organizing your small office space.

1. Get rid of your paper clutter once and for all

According to this study, "Paper clutter is the No. 1 problem for most businesses." And no, they aren't just talking about paper cuts. The study found that the average person wastes more than 4 hours per week searching for papers. This number may be even higher in a small office space.

Don't let paper clutter add stress and frustration to your office space. After you rent office spaces go through your desks and filing cabinets and shred anything that's out of date or no longer relevant to your business. Worried you might need it someday? Scan it and then throw away the hard copy. That way you can keep important documents without sacrificing space.

2. File up up and away

Storing files remotely offers a variety of advantages for business operating out of a small office space. Not only will you save a ton of space by not using file cabinets, using online storage services allow for high accessibility. You can access your files from any device, whether it's a tablet, smartphone or desktop. Also, when you update your files they sync automatically across all of these devices so that the latest version is always available to you and your team. You can easily share and collaborate without wasting valuable time emailing documents back and forth.

3. Make a notable difference

There are no rules when it comes to taking notes. There is no proof that any style works better than another style. What's important is that you choose one style and stick with it. To stay organized as a business owner you must have the right solution for catching tasks and inspirations when they strike. Whether you prefer handwritten or typed, lists or maps - the most important thing is that you use the same method consistently.

Follow these 3 tips and find out why at Westport Plaza we say, "An organized business is a successful business!"

Don't just rent office spaces - Create your business's second home

You can rent office spaces of various sizes and floor plans to fit all of your business needs. But why should the personalization end there? Your office space is your home away from home. The look and feel of your office space says a lot about you and your business. Don't let it send the wrong message.

Whether you are just getting started and plan to rent office spaces for the first time or you are hoping to breathe new life into your current office, it's important to put your best foot forward. Set the bar high for both customers and employees by creating a comfortable waiting area at your entranceway. Invest in a few nice chairs and a table. Add some plants as plants have been proven to be a mood elevator. Whatever you do, make sure that the decor of your waiting area matches the character of your business.

When looking at business spaces for rent, consider looking to rent office spaces that give you freedom to paint the walls. You want your office space to match the type of work you do. If you are in a conservative line of work then a neutral color may fit best. For more creative lines of work, pick a fun and vibrant color. Either way, the color you choose will impact both the mood and the productivity in your office. Don't just settle for whatever color was there when you moved in.
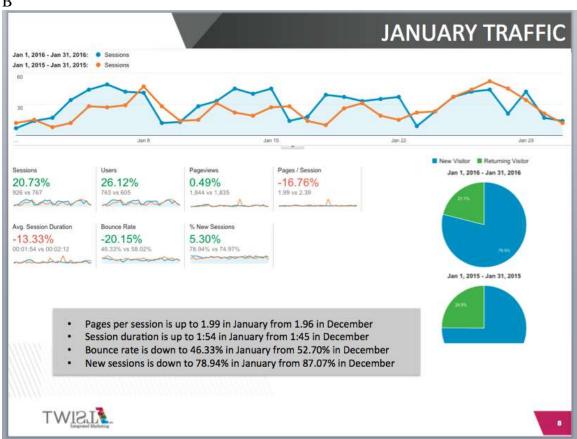
Finally, be sure to keep in mind the temperature in the office. One of the most underrated components of the office experience, temperature affects both productivity and health. There have been many studies into the peak performance temperature for an office environment. Spend some time getting to know the heating and cooling systems in your office so that you can create a comfortable environment for everyone.
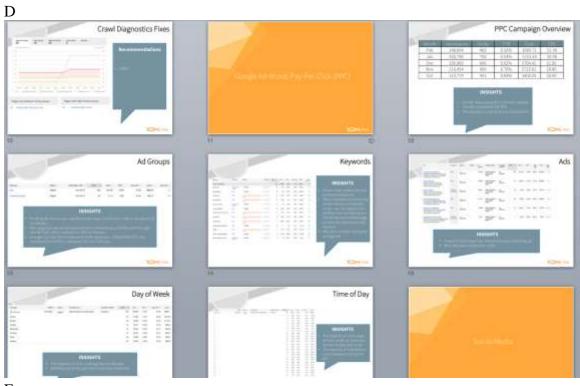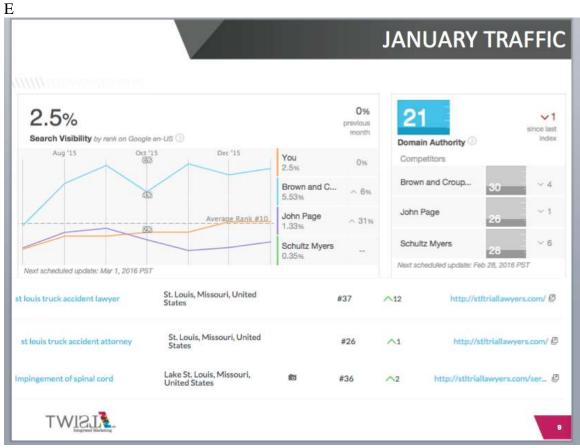
SEO/SEM Reports

A

B

C

46

D

E

Social Media Reports

A

B

48

C

D

E

Web Content Optimization

A

B

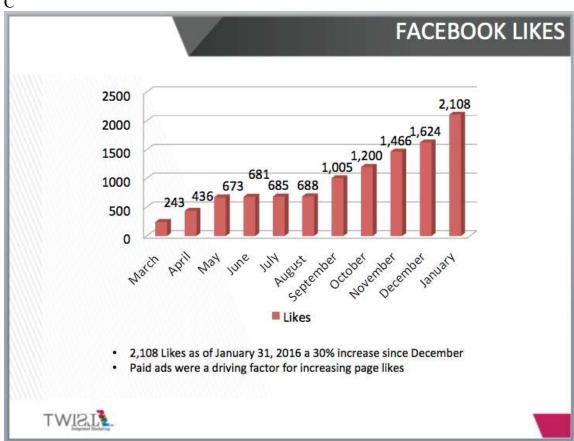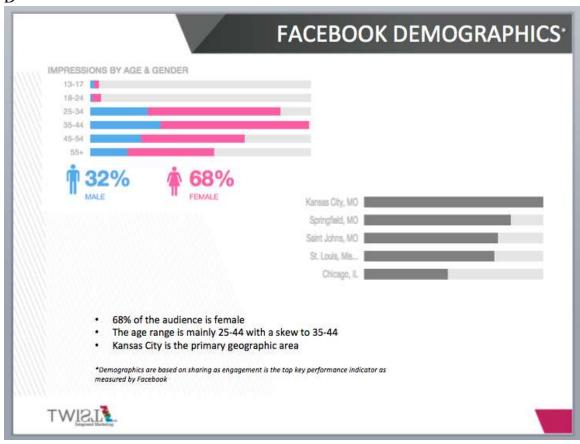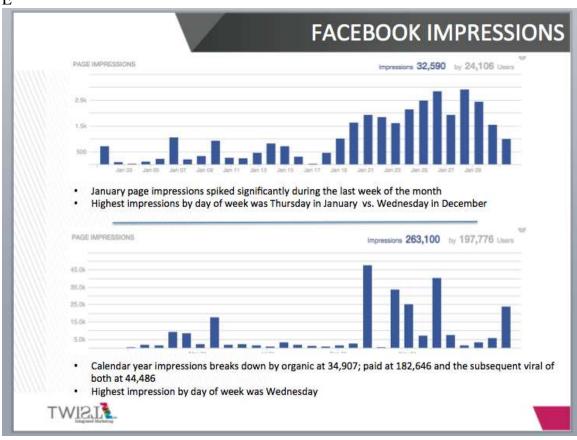## WordPress SEO by Yoast ▲

General **Page Analysis** Advanced Social

To update this page analysis, save as draft or update and check this tab again.

- 🔴 There are 81 words contained in the body copy. This is far too low and should be increased.
- 🟠 The slug for this page is a bit long, consider shortening it.
- 🟠 The images on this page do not have alt tags containing your keyword / phrase.
- 🟡 The page title contains 118 characters, which is more than the viewable limit of 70 characters; some words will not be visible to users in your listing.
- 🟡 No subheading tags (like an H2) appear in the copy.
- 🟢 The keyword / phrase appears in the URL for this page.
- 🟢 This page has 2 outbound link(s).
- 🟢 The keyword appears in the first paragraph of the copy.
- 🟢 The page title contains keyword / phrase, at the beginning which is considered to improve rankings.
- 🟢 In the specified meta description, consider: How does it compare to the competition? Could it be made more appealing?
- 🟢 The meta description contains the primary keyword / phrase.
- 🟢 You've never used this focus keyword before, very good.

C

D

D is a screenshot of a WordPress admin "Edit Service" page.

atlabogado.com/wp-admin/post.php?post=1166&action=edit

Abogado de Accidentes de St. Louis · 8 · 0 · + New · View Service · SEO · Theme Settings · Howdy, Twistadmin

Dashboard
Analytics
Posts
Media
Pages
Comments
Contact
Services

All Services
Add New
Categories
Tags
Types

Testimonials
Appearance
Plugins 7
Users
Tools
Settings
SEO

Screen Options ▼

Edit Service   Add New

Domain Mapping Disabled. You must create a network for it to work.

Accidentes de Abuso de Drogas y Conducir Ebrio

Permalink: http://atlabogado.com/service/accidentes-de-ab...y-conducir-ebrio/   Edit

Add Media   Visual Text

b i link b-quote del ins img ul ol li code more close tags

<div id="containerPageTitle">
<h1 id="pageTitle">ST. LOUIS ABOGADO DE ACCIDENTES CONDUCIENDO BORRACHO</h1>
</div>
<div id="content">
<h2>¿Fue el Abuso de Alcohol o Drogas un Factor en el Accidente?</h2>
Seguimiento de un arresto DUI después de su accidente de conductor que conducía embriagado es sólo un ejemplo del tipo de investigación a fondo que los abogados en Devereaux, Stokes, Nolan, Fernandez & Leonard, P.C., están dispuestos a emprender. Un accidente de auto o camión puede alterar su vida para siempre y merece saber todo lo que puede afectar la cantidad de compensación que está recibiendo.

Accidentes de abuso de drogas y conducir ebrio son muy común. Muchas personas piensan que si se lastimaron por un conductor ebrio el caso está resuelto con clara responsabilidad. Lo que no saben es que un conductor ebrio en realidad puede complicar el caso. Por ejemplo, seguro del conductor ebrio puede tener cobertura excluida especificamente cuando conducir borracho debe confirmarse como un factor que contribuye. Una denuncia penal contra el conductor deteriorado también puede impactar el seguro que está disponible para usted para compensar por sus lesiones. Puede haber vias de compensación que ni siquiera no ha pensado en.

Existen leyes especificas en Missouri y Illinois llamado Dram Shop leyes que suplica la responsabilidad de un bar o restaurante que sigue sirviendo alcohol a una persona obviamente intoxicada que luego lastima

Word count: 331   Last edited by Twistadmin on February 26, 2016 at 7:59 pm

Publish   ▲

Preview Changes

Status: Published Edit
Visibility: Public Edit
Revisions: 6 Browse
Published on: Dec 3, 2014 @ 16:40 Edit
SEO: Good Check

Move to Trash   Update

Categories   ▲

Categories   Most Used

☑ Accidentes de Automobil y Camiones
☐ Parent Categories
☐ Abuso y Negligencia
☐ Accidentes de barco y ATV
☐ Denunciantes/Demandas Qui

E

atl Cooperative Home Care · 9 · 9 · + New · View Post · SEO · BackWPup · Howdy, Twistadmin

Posts

All Posts
Add New
Categories
Tags

Portfolio
Media
Forms
Pages
Comments 3
Appearance
Plugins 8
Users
Tools
Settings
SEO
Revolution Slider
Punch Fonts
Photo Gallery
BackWPup

Winter Home Care Tips

Permalink: http://cooperativehomecare.com/2016/02/29/home-care-tips/   Edit   View Post   Get Shortlink

Add Media   K - Shortcodes   Add Form   Visual Text

b i link b-quote del ins img ul ol li code more close tags

Staying in your own home as you age has many incredible benefits. However, there are some home care responsibilities and upkeep duties that come with the territory. With all of the strange weather that we have seen in St. Louis this winter (from 70 degrees to a full blown snowstorm in a matter of 3 days), we wanted to provide some helpful plumbing tips to keep you, your home and your pipes safe this winter - so we reached out to a well-known plumbing company to put together this list of suggestions.

·   If you find yourself with a frozen pipe when the temperature dips, try warming it up with a hair dryer. Once you take care of it and the water is flowing again, you want to prevent it from freezing yet again. Open up the vanity cabinet doors to keep warm air circulating near the pipes. You can also wrap a towel around the pipes, if they are accessible, for additional insulation. Finally, turn the water on ever so slight, to create a constant drip, allowing water to continuously move through the line. If you are unable to warm up the pipes, just leave them alone and don't ever use a space heater to warm them up. Once the pipe has defrosted, inspect it for a leak which would indicate a split water line. If you notice this, call a qualified plumber to repair the split.
·   Once the weather becomes spring-like, have your gutters cleaned out - this will help you be prepared for heavy rain. It will also help to avoid flooding at home if the gutters are clear of sticks, leaves and debris.
·   Home care includes yard work! You need to regularly clean your yard sprinklers and any fountains outside. If you are planting new trees, make sure to stay clear of lateral sewage lines - tree roots can cause cracks in the pipes and can cause a leak or water backup.
·   Pull out the tub drains and rid them of any blockage. Make sure you have a screen or some type of strainer over them to prevent hair or soap from building up.
·   Remove all showerheads and soak them in white vinegar for 24 hours to help free them of mineral deposits. Use an old toothbrush to remove any excess particles.
·   Run water into drains that you don't use often (i.e. guest tub) to keep odors away.

Word count: 574   Last edited by Twistadmin on February 26, 2016 at 5:20 pm

Publish   ▲

Preview Changes

Status: Published Edit
Visibility: Public Edit
Published on: Feb 29, 2016 @ 17:20 Edit
SEO: Good Check

Move to Trash   Update

Format   ▲

● ⚑ Standard
○ Link
○ Gallery
○ Quote
○ Image
○ Video
○ Audio

Categories   ▲

All Categories   Most Used

F

Edit Post Add New

Chocolate's Effect On Cognitive Performance

Permalink: http://cooperativehomecare.com/2016/03/18/cognitive-perf...-and-chocolate/ Edit | View Post | Get Shortlink

Add Media | B - Shortcodes | Add Form   Visual | Text

Could eating chocolate help improve your cognitive performance?

In the mid 1970s, psychologist Merrill Elias began tracking the cognitive abilities of more than 1,000 people in the state of New York...

Publish

Preview Changes

Status: Published Edit

Visibility: Public Edit

Revisions: 11 Browse

Published on: Mar 18, 2016 @ 15:12 Edit

SEO: Good Check

Move to Trash   Update

Format

Standard / Aside / Link / Gallery / Quote / Image / Video / Audio

Categories

All Categories | Most Used

☑ Blog
☐ About (correct)
☐ Search
☐ The CMS
☐ The Community
☐ The Project

WordPress SEO by Yoast

General | Page Analysis | Advanced | Social

Snippet Preview: **Chocolate's Effect On Cognitive Performance**
cooperativehomecare.com/2016/03/18/cognitive-performance-and-chocolate/

G

WordPress 4.4.2 is available! Please update now.

Screen Options

Edit Page Add New

DWI Overview

Permalink: http://stlcriminaldefense.com/services/dwi/overview/ Edit | View Page | Get Shortlink

Add Media   Visual | Text

[h1]Missouri Driving While Intoxicated Overview[/h1]
At Henderson & Waterbotte, P.C., our DWI attorneys are committed to protecting the rights of individuals charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI / DUI) and other alcohol-related offenses...

Publish

Preview Changes

Status: Published Edit

Visibility: Public Edit

Published on: Sep 15, 2015 @ 21:32 Edit

SEO: Good Check

Move to Trash   Update

Attributes

Parent

DWI

Order

0

Featured Image

Set featured image

Yoast SEO

General | Page Analysis | Advanced | Social

Snippet Preview: **DWI Attorney St. Louis**
stlcriminaldefense.com/services/dwi/overview/

54

H

I

J

PPC Campaigns

A

Ad	Campaign	Ad group	Status ?	Labels ?	% Served ↓ ?	Campaign type ?
In Home Care Givers Affordable, Free Assessments. Call Our Intake Nurses 24/7. www.cooperativehomecare.com	Base Campaign	General	💬 Approved	—	64.78%	Search Network only
Affordable In-Home Care Value Packages, No Minimum Hours, 12 & 24-Hour Shift Rates www.cooperativehomecare.com	Base Campaign	General	💬 Approved	—	14.50%	Search Network only
Home Care Assessment Free, Including Insurance Check. We Accept Medicare & Medicaid. www.cooperativehomecare.com	Base Campaign	General	💬 Approved	—	1.23%	Search Network only
In Home Dementia Care Locally Owned For 30 Years. Call 24/7 For Free Assessment. www.cooperativehomecare.com	Base Campaign	General	💬 Approved	—	1.11%	Search Network only

B

Ad	Campaign	Ad group
Total - all account ?		
Shop The Meadows Blend of national & local retailers More than 30 stores await you! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping
The Meadows at STL A high quality shopping experience. Shop 30 national & local retailers! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping
Shop The Meadows Blend shopping with pleasure! Stroll & relax in our outdoor plaza www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping
Shop The Meadows Stroll through the open air plaza. Enjoy 40+ boutiques & restaurants! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping
{Keyword:shopping center} A high quality shopping experience. More than 30 stores await you! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping
{Keyword:shopping mall} Blend of national & local retailers More than 30 stores await you! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping
{Keyword:outdoor mall} Stroll through the open air plaza. Enjoy 40+ boutiques + restaurants! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Shopping

C

Ad	Campaign	Ad group
Total - all account ?		
Fun Family Activities Looking for something to do? Check out our year-round events! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Family Events
Year-Round Events Have fun with the whole family. See what's going on at the Meadows! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Family Events
Free Family Activities It's always fun at the Meadows! Check out our year-round events! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Family Events
{Keyword:family activities} Looking for something fun to do? Check out our year-round events! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Family Events
{Keyword:free family activities} It's always fun at the Meadows! Check out our year-round events! www.themeadowsatlsl.com	Pay-Per-Click	Family Events

D

Ad	Ad group	Status ?	Labels ?	% Served ?	Campaign type ?	Campaign subtype	Clicks ? ↓	Impr. ?	CTR ?
Household Cleaning Make spring cleaning fun! Check out our cleaning tips. missouripoisoncenter.org/	Spring Cleaning	💬 Approved	–	5.10%	Search Network with Display Select	All features	219	5,367	4.08%
{Keyword:mushrooms} There are toxic + nontoxic types. Learn how to tell the difference. missouripoisoncenter.org/	Mushrooms	💬 Approved	–	2.97%	Search Network with Display Select	All features	74	3,127	2.37%
Proper Food Storage Tips Be Safe And Learn More About The Dangers Of Incorrect Food Storage. missouripoisoncenter.org/	Misc	💬 Approved	–	27.46%	Search Network with Display Select	All features	73	28,906	0.25%
Poison Help 24-7 Save our number, save lives. Poison help is just a call away. missouripoisoncenter.org/	Misc	💬 Approved	–	28.43%	Search Network with Display Select	All features	62	29,932	0.21%
Food Storage Safety Tips Store Your Thanksgiving Leftovers In a Safe Way. Read For More Tips! missouripoisoncenter.org/	Misc	💬 Approved	–	8.38%	Search Network with Display Select	All features	42	8,820	0.48%

58

Chapter Five: Analysis

Theoretical Framework

      As the framework for my research, I used a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory is distinguished from other theories since it intentionally blurs the distinction between data collection and analysis and allows for both to be done simultaneously.

      There are innumerable examples of grounded theory being successfully employed in previous research within the field of journalism. For example, Vivian B. Martin successfully utilized grounded theory in her study of daily news regimens. She sought to explain the process of how people interact with news every day. Working from a grounded approach, Martin conducted 86 face-to-face interviews as well as a document analysis of Internet discussion groups around various news events, news articles, surveys and industry reports, letters to the editor, informal letters and emails sent to writers and editors, and college student essays (Martin, 2008).

      According to Charmaz (2006), the main advantage of grounded theory is that you may learn about gaps in your data during the earliest stages of research. This gives you the opportunity to find sources of needed data and fill the gaps.
Grounded theory informed both the methods I use and the way I conducted my research. Through simultaneous participant observation and individual interviews I explored the role of training in managing an integrated communications approach.

Literature Review

   Introduction. Traditionally, marketing efforts have been divided by category.

Agencies developed separate campaigns for advertising, sales promotion, public

relations, etc. However, the practices of marketing and public relations are rapidly

changing to a more integrated approach blurring previously established lines. According

to Convergence of Marketing (2014), experts estimate that the pace of this change will

accelerate in the next five years.

   Numerous agencies are moving towards integration. For example,

FleishmanHillard recently rebranded in an attempt to become an integrated marketing

communications agency that offers services like advertising and social media marketing

in addition to public relations (Elliott, 2013).

   The following literature review defines IMC and explains the growing trend

towards integration. It looks at who can benefit from using IMC, how practitioners can

take advantage of IMC and examines some obstacles standing in the way of integration.

   Defining integrated marketing communications (IMC). Coined in the late

1980s in an attempt to define marketing methods in the post mass-marketing era, the term

"integrated marketing communications" caused some confusion in the minds of industry

professionals (Smith, 1995). Confusion about the definition of IMC still exists today.

Rather than relying on one official definition, most industry professionals have their own

ideas of what integrated marketing communications means to them. However, there are

several key concepts present in most working definitions of IMC.

   The most recurrent concept is consistency. Many integrated approaches focus on

consistency of message across the elements of the campaign including advertising and

public relations. Smith (1995) discusses Lane Bryant as an example of this. When Lane Bryant aimed to maximize credibility and sales impact within the African-American market, it used a coordinated approach to create a consistent message, voice and look for all of its marketing efforts (Smith, 1995). Lane Bryant coordinated its mailings and in-store events with a five-city mall tour. This tour ran in tandem with a new ad that offered a store coupon. The integrated campaign also utilized radio advertisements and publicity in local markets to build awareness and draw consumers to the events (Smith, 1995.)

Another concept that is consistent in the literature is consumer interaction. Technological developments now allow for companies to talk with consumers rather than talk at them. It also allows for consumers to talk to each other. This makes marketing communications a dynamic process. In order to take advantage of these dynamics, Tom Duncan, the University of Colorado's IMC program head, says that building relationships through consumer interaction should be the goal of IMC (as cited in Smith, 1995).

According to Persuit (2013), IMC moves away from the methods of mass communication. It does not view communication as a one-way, linear model. Instead communication is an interactive and multidimensional process (Persuit, 2013). This multidimensional communication model allows marketers to interact with consumers to build strong relationships and brand connection. Research by Lang and Ewoldsen (2010) adds to this line of thinking. Their book stresses the importance of feedback and warns against ignoring the two-way nature of communication (Lang & Ewoldsen, 2010). According to Lang and Ewoldsen (2010), incorporating feedback into a campaign leaves room to change something and then change it back or change it in another way. This gives practitioners more flexibility in their campaigns.

Finally, most marketing practitioners agree that IMC utilizes a variety of marketing disciplines. IMC methods stem from the belief that the development of new media does not reduce the value of traditional marketing techniques. Rather than choosing between the different techniques, IMC methods aim for seamless integration of old and new techniques (Brand, 2009). When campaigns are built in this way, content and strategies can build off of and enhance each other. According to an article in PR News (Anonymous, 2009), fusing the best of each discipline strengthens a campaign. This article offers "brand storytelling" as an example of a successful integrated marketing tactic (Anonymous, 2009). Ed Woodcock, director of narrative at Aesop marketing agency, defines brand storytelling as the application of narrative thinking and storytelling techniques to define brands, inform strategy and structure creative activity (Woodcock, 2011). Brand storytelling borrows from each discipline; taking the credibility of public relations, the value of advertising and the measurability of online (Anonymous, 2009).

Based on an analysis of the literature listed above, the researcher will use the following definition for IMC for the purposes of this project: Integrated marketing communications is a strategic approach that utilizes a variety of marketing disciplines to create clear, consistent and effective campaigns that interact with consumers in a powerful way. According Persuit (2013), IMC is human communication. It allows brands to interact with consumers in a natural, holistic and human way.

Explaining the growing trend toward integration. Most practitioners agree that IMC is a necessity in today's industry. However, this was not always the case. In order to understand IMC's surge in popularity in recent years, a brief analysis of the history of IMC is necessary.

According to an article by Larsen and Len-Rios (2006), IMC developed in the 1980s and 1990s. As the industry moved away from mass marketing, communication professionals had to adapt.

One reason IMC surged in popularity is that it was cost efficient. According to a study by Rose and Miller (1994), an increased emphasis on bottom-line profits served as an incentive for agencies to become more integrated. It was more cost efficient for agencies to add in-house functions than it was to contract out. When the recession caused clients to reduce their communication budgets, it became crucial that agencies figure out how to get their clients the most bang for their buck (Anonymous, 2009).
The surge in integrated marketing communications can also be attributed to the growing popularity of digital marketing. Developments in digital technology forced communication professionals to integrate (Anonymous, 2009; Persuit, 2013). These developments led to the introduction of many new media channels. It became important for agencies to be able to develop campaigns that could carry across every media channel (Integrated Marketing, 2012).

Also, a perceived need for IMC on the part of the client caused many agencies to become full-service (Rose & Miller, 1994). Clients began to believe that they needed an integrated marketing campaign. Many agencies started adding more functions to meet the demands of their clients and stay current in the communications industry.

Who can benefit from using integrated methods. Rosemary Ryan, online editor at B&T Weekly, insists that the key to staying on top in the communications industry is to become integral to your clients. According to Ryan (2005), real partnerships exist when clients view marketing practitioners as essential to success, not as

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interchangeable commodities. Ryan contends that the best way for practitioners to become integral is through the utilization of IMC (Ryan, 2005).

IMC should be on the agenda for companies who advertise across multiple media channels, target niche markets or care about the accountability behind their campaigns (Integrated Marketing, 2012). As this depiction arguably fits all companies today, all marketing practitioners and clients alike can benefit from integrated methods.

How practitioners can take advantage of IMC. There are many different strategies when it comes to implementing a successful integrated marketing plan. Careful examination of each strategy allows for an understanding of how practitioners can successfully utilize IMC.

Brand (2009), suggests looking at marketing in a different way. Traditionally, communication professionals envision the different areas of marketing as separated by a line. He suggests instead envisioning a wagon wheel diagram to reflect the nonlinear, integrated approach (Brand, 2009).

According to Jones (2008), the customer has become the media. Consumers report their experiences with brands through the use of online sites such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. This shift in who is telling the brand story creates an opportunity for communications professionals (Jones, 2008). Integrated marketing campaigns should be developed around the stories customers are telling (Jones, 2008). Some practitioners argue that the best strategy for implementing a successful integrated marketing plan is to switch the focus from attitudes to behaviors. Traditional marketing focuses on the attitudes of customers. Persuit (2013) suggests IMC practitioners focus on the behaviors of customers. According to her study, the behaviors of customers more

accurately indicate how they will act in the future (Persuit, 2013). Also, focusing on behaviors allows for better measurement and evaluation (Persuit, 2013).

Another strategy is to focus on branding. Many practitioners argue that branding is the most effective marketing tool (Anonymous, 2009; Jones, 2008; Pursuit, 2013). A recent study conducted by ARAnet and Opinion Research Corp. showed that consumers are far more likely to take action when reading online articles that include brand information (51%), as compared to search engine advertising (39%) or banner advertising (25%) (as cited in Anonymous, 2009).

Obstacles standing in the way of integration. Communications practitioners must overcome multiple obstacles in order to successfully manage IMC. An analysis of the literature has revealed three major hurdles that communications practitioners face: organizational barriers, the inability to measure success and a lack of training.

The biggest hurdles communications practitioners face when trying to implement integrated marketing systems are organizational ones (Smith, 1995). Eliminating silos and moving to cross-organizational integration can be difficult. For example, IBM moved from centralized communications functions to a decentralized team approach, and then to a marketing services "account manager" approach. Then, the company dismantled its vertical marketing functions completely in favor of cross-functional teams (Smith, 1995). Much of this organizational trouble stems from marketing departments' fears of losing resources and decision-making power (Smith, 1995).

The second hurdle is the inability of agencies to measure the success and impact of integrated marketing campaigns (Smith, 1995). Paul Root, president of the Marketing Sciences Institute in Cambridge, says that companies are implementing IMC, but want to

know how to evaluate it, how much to commit to their overall communications budget, and how to justify these decisions (Smith, 1995). According to Rachel Hatton, planning director at Ogilvy Group, measuring both long-term and real-time presents a challenge for agencies (as cited in Derrick, 2011). Angela Jeffrey, U.S. Strategy Director at Salience Insight, adds to this opinion by saying that most communication professionals lack the analytics training necessary to measure integrated marketing campaigns effectively (as cited in Convergence of Marketing, 2014). According to Kliatchko (2008), IMC approaches should look to measure behavioral responses and outcomes. This differs from traditional approaches to measurement, which look to evaluate communication effects and outputs (Kliatchko, 2008). For example, an IMC approach would measure purchases and financial returns, while a traditional approach would measure brand recall and what media placements were bought (Schultz & Walters, 1997). Therefore, the drive for accountability is the core of IMC as IMC programs must be accountable for business results (Kliatchko, 2008).

The third main hurdle communications practitioners face is a lack of training in integrated marketing strategies. Rose and Miller (1994) argue that while more and more clients are demanding an integrated marketing campaign, most communications practitioners are not equipped to develop such a campaign.

Professional training and development can take many forms such as seminars, workshops, continuing education courses, and self-study (Rose & Miller, 1994). While graduate school is an option, most professionals won't abandon job security for the sake of obtaining a degree (Rose & Miller, 1994). Thus, training needs to be designed around the needs and schedules of working professionals (Rose & Miller, 1994).

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Rose and Miller (1994) conducted a self-administered, national mail survey of American

Advertising Federation (AAF) and Public Relations Society of America (PRSA)

members to identify and compare the perceived educational needs of advertising and

public relations practitioners. The survey was completed by 564 individuals for an overall

response rate of 25% (Rose & Miller, 1994). They found that more than 74.1% of

advertising professionals and more than 80.1% of public relations professionals conveyed

an interest in further professional training (Rose & Miller, 1994). For both groups of

professionals, the main reason for wanting training is to keep current in the profession

(Rose & Miller, 1994). Another motive for training is as a means of career advancement

(Rose & Miller, 1994).

The need for training does not just affect those at a professional level. According

to Larsen & Len-Rios, it has also affected the education and development of

communication students. As the line separating marketing disciplines becomes more

blurred, employers expect to see related changes in the students' skillsets (Larsen & Len-

Rios, 2006). Larsen and Len-Rios (2006) conducted a web-based survey of educators

teaching courses in advertising, public relations or strategic communication designed to

explore the current status of curriculum integration from the perspective of an educator.

A total of 197 surveys were completed, yielding a 41% response rate (Larsen & Len-

Rios, 2006). They found that only 13% of respondents said their programs were partially

integrated (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). Furthermore, only 23% of respondents said they

believed the curricula in their program would become more integrated in the next three

years (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). These findings show a disconnect between what

skillsets employers expect students to have and what skillsets are actually being taught to students.

Conclusion. In summation, this review of the literature shows that integrated marketing communications is a rising trend in the industry. IMC has become a popular strategic approach to marketing, thanks to a growth in digital marketing, a demand for IMC by clients and its cost efficient nature. The benefits of IMC are not limited to certain agencies or categories. All marketing practitioners and clients alike can benefit from integrated methods. However, they will have to overcome organizational hurdles, measurement complications and a general lack of training.

For the purpose of this study, the topic will be broadened from integrated marketing communications to integrated communications. According to Clarke Caywood (2012), the use of the term "integrated communications" bridges the gap between academic communications, public relations and advertising. Using this term will allow the researcher to examine all means of communication that an agency may utilize. Based on this information, the researcher proposes an examination of one of the obstacles of integration, specifically a general lack of training. To that end, a qualitative study will be conducted to answer the following two research questions that could be beneficial to the communications industry.

RQ1: What is the role of training within an agency in managing an integrated approach?

RQ2: How can agencies utilizing an integrated approach best meet the training needs of employees?

Methodology

Research Design. I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board before beginning any research.

The first step was data collection. I used two different methods: participation observation and individual interviews. According to Charmaz (2006), the two methods work well together as participant observation at interview and field sites helps to facilitate interviews. Interviews are the primary method of collecting data, but participant observation gives a distinctive insight, revealing what people are really doing, instead of what they say they are doing (Laitinen & Kaunonen & Astedt-Kurki, 2014)

Participant observation plan.

Introduction. Participant observation is a data collection method that reveals the reality of daily life in a specific context (Laitinen & Kaunonen & Astedt-Kurki, 2014). From the start, participant observation in a grounded theory study takes a different form than other types of ethnographies (Charmaz, 2006). Priority is given to the studied phenomenon; so grounded theorists study what is happening in the setting and make a conceptual rendering of these actions (Charmaz, 2006).

The participation observation took place at a mid-sized, Midwestern integrated communications agency and lasted eight weeks.

Open coding. In open coding, the incidents, events and happenings observed are analyzed as potential indicators of phenomena and given conceptual labels (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, if I observed that a participant spread his or her activities over the morning, taking a coffee break between tasks, then I labeled this phenomenon as "pacing." If I observed other incidents, and upon comparison to the first, noticed they resemble the same phenomena, those incidents were also labeled as "pacing." According

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to Corbin and Strauss (1990), only by comparing incidents and naming like phenomena with the same term can a theorist accumulate the basic units for theory. These comparisons assist the researcher in guarding against bias, since they lead the researcher to challenge concepts with fresh data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Next, categories were developed and rated (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Concepts that pertained to the same phenomena were grouped into categories; however, not all concepts became categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), categories are generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences, but categories are higher in level and more abstract than concepts. Continuing with the example presented above, in addition to the concept of "pacing" I also might have generated the concepts "resting," "taking a lunch break," and "chatting at the water cooler." While these concepts are different in practice, they seem to be part of a similar process: spreading out activities to avoid burnout at work. Thus, they could be grouped under a more abstract category of "Self Strategies for Avoiding Burnout."

The next step was sampling. In grounded theory, sampling proceeds in terms of concepts, their properties, dimensions and variations rather than in terms of specific individuals, units of time and so on (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, I was not sampling employees of the integrated agency. Instead, I was sampling the incidents, events and happenings that represented the work done by those employees as well as the conditions that facilitated, interrupted or prevented their work and the consequences that resulted from their work. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), it is through this theoretical sampling that representativeness of concepts and consistency are achieved.

Axial coding. In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories and the

relationship is tested against the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). I made sure to account

for patterns and variations. The data was examined for regularity and for an

understanding of where the regularity was not apparent (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For

example, if I noticed that the Vice President of Brand Management leads all of the brand

management team meetings I noted that as a pattern. If, however, I also noted that when

the Vice President of Brand Management was extremely busy they delegated the

leadership role to the Senior Brand Manager, then I noted that as a variation of the

original pattern.

Selective coding. Selective coding is the process by which all categories are

unified around a "core" category (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Corbin and

Strauss (1990), these core categories represent the central phenomena of the study. For

example, to determine my core category I asked myself, "What is the main analytic idea

presented in this research?"

During this stage of the research process, poorly developed categories (categories

for which few properties have been uncovered in the data) are identified (Corbin &

Strauss, 1990). The researcher returns to the field to obtain data that will fill the gaps in

order for the theory to have explanatory power (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Continuing

with the example presented above, if I determined that my category "Self Strategies for

Avoiding Burnout" was lacking conceptual density, then I returned to the office and

continued participant observation until that category was filled-in with descriptive detail.

Writing memos. In order to keep track of all the concepts, categories, properties,

hypotheses and questions that arose during my participant observation, I implemented a

memo-writing system. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), writing memos should begin with the first coding session and continue until the end of the research. Memos vary in form and length according to the stage of research and type of coding (Corbin & Straus, 1990). Through these memos I explored, explained and hypothesized emerging data. For example, when coding the concept "pacing," the accompanying memo might have elaborated on the concept with names of participants, specific activities, language used, my interpretations of the data and the hypotheses developed. I believed that taking field notes during the participant observation would have drawn unwanted attention, so I made notes at the end of each workday.

Interviews plan.

Introduction. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Interviews are the primary method of collecting data in qualitative research (Nunkoosing, 2005). According to Charmaz (2001), the advantages of in-depth qualitative interviews for conducting grounded theory analysis are unassailable. One advantage is that the interviewer assumes more direct control over the construction of data than does a researcher using most other methods, such as ethnography or textual analysis (Charmaz, 2001). Also, since grounded theory methods depend on flexibility, the combination of flexibility and control inherent in in-depth interviewing techniques fits grounded theory strategies (Charmaz, 2001).

To maintain the flexibility that is an integral part of grounded theory, I conducted semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviewing, a guide is used, with

questions and topics that must be covered (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). I served as moderator of the interviews, and used a guide consisting of seven core questions, each with optional prompts and follow-up questions. The interview questions changed as new data was gathered and analyzed; however, the questions were standardized and probes were provided to ensure I cover the correct material.

Process. I conducted 10 semi-structured in-depth interviews. All interviewees were employed at the mid-sized, integrated marketing agency where the participant observation occurred. Their ages ranged from 24 to 55 and multiple roles were represented, including but not limited to, brand manger, graphic designer, VP and owner. The sample included both men and women with varying amounts of experience in the industry. Due to limited time and connections I used a convenience sample. A convenience sample is a non-probability sample of research participants or subjects selected not for their representativeness, but for their accessibility or handiness, such as when university researchers use their own students (Colman, 2015).

Due to the nature of grounded theory, there were no strict criteria for sample size. According to Charmaz (1990), the sample should depend upon developing the range of relevant conceptual categories, saturating those categories and fully explaining the data. I planned for 12 interviews but I stopped after 10. I believe I reached saturation, as the latter interviews were not offering any new insights on the categories.
Eight of the interviews were conducted in person, and two were conducted via Skype. As expected, each interview lasted around 30 minutes.

Participant Observation

       Introduction. Throughout the observation period, trends and patterns were noted and the data collected was used to reveal the reality of daily life at an integrated communications agency. Through a careful examination of this data, key insights into the management of integrated communications were developed.

       Setting.

Figure 1. Office Map. This figure illustrates the layout of the office.

       The office is divided down the middle with a wall that extends ¾ of the way up to the ceiling. Aside from this partition, the office utilizes an open floor plan. There are not any separate offices or cubicles for individual employees.

       The office has white walls and grey carpeting which; combined with the open floor plan, make it feel very large. There are two different styles of desks throughout the

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office, all of which are white. One side of the office has four workstations, each with space for three employees to sit. The other side has 10 tabletop desks. Each of these desks seats one employee. All of the tabletop desks have a two-drawer, rolling file cabinet placed next to them. Every desk is paired with a black, high-backed, rolling office chair. Three of the tabletop desks sit empty. The others each have an HP laptop computer, Allworx telephone, and a dual monitor.

The office does not have many decorations. There are bulletin boards, wall calendars and personal photos hung in a few places on the walls. However, most of the walls are bare. Along the base of each exterior wall there is a long, metal storage set. It is made of large drawers and cabinets that are used to hold files, magazines, office supplies, etc. At the back of the office there are two long, blue tables placed end to end and surrounded by 12 chairs. The tables are usually empty except for a large bowl of assorted candy.

Participants. Typically, there are between 10 to 15 people in the office at any given time. This number varies, as there are four part-time employees who work fewer hours and are not regularly in the office. The employees are mostly female, and every employee is white. The biggest demographic variant is age. Employees' ages appear to range from early 20s to mid 50s.

Most employees remain at their desks for the majority of the workday, with occasional moves to the conference rooms and back tables for meetings. Employees also spend a small amount of time in the office bathrooms and kitchen.

Two generations are strongly represented among the research participants, Generation X and Millennials. George Masnick of the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies defines

Generation X as people born in the timeframe of 1965 to 1984 (Bump, 2014). This

timeframe indicates that today Generation X members are between the ages of 32 and 51.

The second generation with a strong representation at the office was the Millennial

generation. Researchers Neil Howe and William Strauss define Millennials as those born

in the timeframe of 1982 to 2004 (Bump, 2014). This timeframe indicates that today

Millennials are between the ages of 12 and 34.

    Activities. Activities observed include, but are not limited to, individual work,

team meetings, phone calls, office lunches, team bonding exercises and client meetings.

Table 1

Dress

Clothing	Title	Occasion
Leggings	SBM, BM	Regular workday (in office)
Jeans (dark)	SBM, BM, BC, Jr art, VP digital, Designer, VP PR, Owner, VP brand, VP strategy	Regular workday (in office)
Jeans (light)	Jr art, Designer, BM	Regular workday (in office)
Slacks	OM, VP strategy, VP digital, Developer, Owner, VP brand, VP PR	Regular workday (in office)
Sweater (pullover)	BM, BC, JR art, Designer, SBM	Regular workday (in office)
Sweater (cardigan)	VP Strategy, VP PR, OM, SBM, BC	Regular workday (in office)
Blazer	VP digital, VP strategy, VP brand	Regular workday (in office)
Button-up blouse/shirt	Owner, VP strategy, Vp digital, developer	Regular workday (in office)
Blouse	VP digital, VP strategy, VP PR, Designer, OM	Regular workday (in office)
Boots	VP digital, VP strategy, VP brand, SBM, BM, BC, Jr art, Designer	Regular workday (in office)
Dress flats/shoes	Owner, VP digital, VP strategy, VP brand, VP PR, OM, Developer	Regular workday (in office)
Tennish Shoes	SBM, BM, Jr art	Regular workday (in office)
Heels	BC, SBM, VP Digital, VP brand	Regular workday (in office)
Leggings		Client Meeting
Jeans (dark)	SBM, BM, BC, Jr art, VP digital, Designer, VP PR, VP brand, VP strategy	Client Meeting
Jeans (light)		Client Meeting
Slacks	OM, VP strategy, VP digital, Developer, Owner, VP brand, VP PR	Client Meeting
Sweater (pullover)	BM, BC, JR art, Designer, SBM	Client Meeting
Sweater (cardigan)	VP Strategy, VP PR, OM, SBM, BC	Client Meeting
Blazer	VP digital, VP strategy, VP brand	Client Meeting
Button-up blouse/shirt	Owner, VP strategy, Vp digital, developer	Client Meeting
Blouse	VP digital, VP strategy, VP PR, Designer, OM	Client Meeting
Boots	VP digital, VP strategy, VP brand, SBM, BM, BC, Jr art, Designer	Client Meeting
Dress flats/shoes	Owner, VP digital, VP strategy, VP brand, VP PR, OM, Developer	Client Meeting
Tennish Shoes	Jr art	Client Meeting
Heels	BC, SBM, VP Digital, VP brand	Client Meeting

*Job Titles: SBM = senior brand manager, BM = brand manager, BC = brand

coordinator, JR art = junior art director, OM = office manager

    Overall, manner of dress within the office could be classified as business causal or

professional dress. Most employees wore dark jeans or slacks and a blouse or sweater.

For the most part employee's attire remained consistent whether they were meeting with clients or simply working at their desks all day, with the exception of leggings. While some younger employees wore leggings in the office occasionally, no employee ever wore leggings to work on a day when a client meeting was scheduled.

Table 2

Lunch habits.

Activity	Title	Status
Lunch	All employees	Alone (out of office)
Lunch	All employees	Alone (in office)
Lunch	BM, BC, Jr art, Designer	Informal Group (out of office)
Lunch	BM, BC, Jr art, Designer	Informal Group (in office)
Lunch	VP digital, BM, VP brand, OM, BC	Formal Group Lunch

*Job Titles: BM = brand manager, BC = brand coordinator, JR art = junior art director, OM = office manager

Ordinarily all employees ate lunch alone, with an even split between eating out of the office or at their desks. However, some employees would occasionally eat lunch together. The majority of these meals occurred outside of the office; however, the employees occasionally ordered food and ate together in the office.

Table 3

Non-work related activities

Concepts	Categories
Pacing Getting mints Getting water bottles Making a loop around the office Small talk Phone calls (personal) Texting (personal) Social Media Phone time Planking competition Leaving for Coffee Making coffee	Self-Strategies For Avoiding Burnout

Employees demonstrated many different strategies for avoiding burnout at work. Throughout the period of observation, all employees were observed making small talk, taking personal phone calls, spending time on personal social media accounts, etc. No apparent pattern appeared for when these strategies would be employed, whether by employee, day of week or time of day.

Table 4

Feedback.

Concepts	Categories
"I'm so proud of you!" "Great, great work!" "These look great." "Perfect!" "I love it." "Thanks!" "Awesome job!" "Cool." "Great!" "This looks awesome." "Perfect." "Thank you so much!" "You rocked it!" "Awesome." "Nailed it!"	Enthusiastic Feedback Acknowledgments

All of the feedback witnessed within the office was positive feedback. Most

likely, this was due to the fact that negative feedback and concerns were addressed in a

one-on-one meeting, which could not be observed. While all observed feedback was

positive, some ranked much higher in positivity and enthusiasm than others. The younger

employees typically gave the most enthusiastic feedback.

Table 5

Communication.

Concepts	Categories
"Circle back" "Close the loop" Talk on phone (with coworker) Talk on phone (with client) "Story" Approach desk 'Shout' across office Email "Integrity" "Aligned" Slack messaging Meeting (formal) Gathering (informal) "Flag" "Soft seed" Text message "High level" "Touch base"	Formal Communication Informal Communication Jargon

Communication within the office appeared unorganized. Some employees utilized

formal means of communication such as emails, phone calls and official meetings. Other

employees utilized informal communication such as shouting questions across the office,

text messages and spontaneously approaching coworkers' desks. There was no apparent

strategy for when each means of communication should be employed.

There was also a significant amount of industry jargon observed within the office. The younger employees displayed a tendency towards using abbreviations, colloquialisms and industry jargon, more so than the older employees.

Table 6

Tracking hours.

Concepts	Categories
Daily timesheet update	Value-Centric Work Strategies
Weekly timesheet update	Hour-Centric Work Strategies
Account labels (on timesheet)	Strategies For Work-Life Balance
Task labels (on timesheet)	
Punctuality	
Work late	
Working lunch	
Work weekends (remotely)	
Sick days off	
Paid time off	
Sick days in office	
Weather-related time off	
Rain or shine attitude	
Leave early	
Long lunch	

Employees were required to keep track of their hours using QuickBooks timesheets. Some employees filled out their timesheets daily, while other employees updated their timesheets weekly. The amount of detail used in the timesheets also varied. Younger employees' timesheets were observed to be more detailed and task-oriented while older employees' filled out their timesheets more broadly.

Work habits within the office also varied by employee. While some employees were observed to value punctuality, others frequently arrived late. There appeared to be no consequences for tardiness. Some employees were observed leaving the office before the workday had ended. Throughout the observation period, there were two altercations

between employees about this issue. However, despite these altercations some employees continued to leave early.

It was not uncommon to observe employees working through their lunch break at their desks. Many employees ordered food to be delivered to the office if they had a busy schedule that day. It was also not uncommon to observe sick employees in the office. Very few employees took sick days during the observation period, as most were observed showing up for work despite various illnesses.

Table 7

Training.

Concepts	Categories
Content writing workshop PR Newswire tutorial Optional digital training Meeting sit-ins Phone call listen-ins Lack of training Cross training gaps	Formal Training Informal Training

There was a notable lack of formal training within the office during the observation period. On one occasion, two employees were sent to Chicago for a content writing workshop. No other formal training occurred. However, there were some opportunities for informal training. Employees had the option of sitting in on meetings and phone calls if they wanted to learn and observe; however, of the 15 employees that were regularly in the office only approximately three ever took advantage of this opportunity. There were also opportunities for employees to learn from each other directly. Employees were often observed giving each other impromptu tutorials on various things such as how to use PR Newswire or how to launch an ad in Facebook.

However, there was a large amount of informal training. This usually took the form of hands-on training, and occurred on an as-needed basis. Most of this training was self-directed. I often taught myself how to complete new tasks, and familiarized myself with new software. For this type of training to work, employees need to be self-motivated.

Throughout the observation period, this self-directed training most frequently occurred when employees saw the potential for personal gain. For example, I took it upon myself to take the Google Certification courses and become Google Certified in AdWords because I saw how doing so would immediately benefit me personally. I knew that taking the certification course would increase my skills and improve my chances of receiving a job offer. Employees were observed to resist training when they did not see how the training would benefit them. For example, one employee actively opposed being trained in a new method of PR reporting. When another employee offered to help teach him he said, "It will be faster if you just do it."

Table 8

New technology.

Concepts	Categories
Gmail	Resisting
Slack	Embracing
Google docs	
Resistance	
Refusal	
Complaints	
Excitement	
Acceptance	
Absence of Training (official)	
Helping (unofficial)	

Throughout the observation period there were several technological changes within the office. The majority of older employees were observed resisting these changes,

if not outright refusing to adapt to them. Younger employees were more excited about new forms of technology that were introduced and accepted most changes without question. The office manager was the exception to this trend. Despite being one of the older employees, the office manager embraced all technological changes that took place and was often observed helping other employees adjust.

There were no formal training sessions for any new technologies introduced to the office. On one occasion an office-wide email indicated there would be a training session for Gmail and Google Docs; however, the training never took place. Most employees adjusted to the new technologies through trial and error, and by voluntarily helping each other.

Table 9

Meetings.

Concepts	Categories
All employees Brand team Account Impromptu Training Digital team 1-on-1	Meetings

Throughout the observation period many different types of meetings took place. There were all employee meetings, which always occurred first thing in the morning. These meetings took place in the large conference room and were always scheduled at least 14 days in advance using Google Calendar. The office manager always supplied a breakfast food (bagels or donuts) half an hour before the meeting.

Second, there were brand team meetings, which occurred at varying times of day. These meetings always took place in the large conference room. Although they were called "brand meetings" not every member of the brand team went to each one. The attendees usually varied, sometimes even including members of the digital team.

Another common meeting was an account meeting. These occurred in various locations around the office. If the large conference room was available, the account meeting always occurred there. If the large conference room were unavailable, the account meeting would take place at the back tables. If both the large conference room and back tables were unavailable, the account meeting would take place in the small conference room.

There were also impromptu meetings, which occurred almost daily. These meetings took place in many different locations such as the large conference room, back tables, or at an employee's desk with no apparent pattern as to why one location was selected.

Table 20

Work habits

Activity	Title	Status
Work	All employees	Alone (at desk)
Work	BM, BC	Informal Group

*Job Titles: BM = brand manager, BC = brand coordinator

All employees conducted the bulk of their work individually at their desks; however, some employees would occasionally work in pairs or a small group on certain tasks and projects. These small collaborations were always informal and usually unplanned.

Analysis.

Social differences. Age appears to be the strongest factor that influences social behavior within the office. Employees that belong to an older generation tended to work individually on the majority of their tasks while Millennials tended to collaborate with their peers. Younger employees were frequently observed asking each other for ideas, proofreading help and general advice. Millennials prefer to work in teams, in part because they perceive group-based work to be more fun, but also because they like to avoid risk (Alsop 2008; Gursoy et al. 2008). This mentality may be a result of group-based learning and project groups throughout their years in school (Howe and Strauss, 2007). Whereas Generation X workers like to work autonomously and dislike meeting and group work (Martin, 2005).

Furthermore, older employees are more likely to eat lunch and spend breaks alone. These employees were often observed leaving the office to grab lunch and run errands by themselves or eating a solitary lunch at their desks. Younger employees tended to eat and spend time in pairs or groups. According to Alsop (2008), Millennials report that working and interacting with other members of a team makes work more pleasurable

Integrated communications managers should nurture this growing trend towards collaboration, as collaboration and integration go hand in hand. Teams and employees within an integrated communications agency need to work together seamlessly to create a consistent campaign.

Feedback. Also, there is a significant difference in the style of feedback given by employees. Employees of a younger generation were much more praising in their

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feedback than older employees. Frequently observed Millennial responses included, "Great, great work" "I'm so proud of you" and "Awesome Job!" Older employees were more likely to leave a completed task unacknowledged. Millennials expect communication with supervisors to be more frequent, and more positive than has been the case with members of Generation X. An annual review will not be sufficient. Employers must be willing to provide consistent feedback and a clearly defined path for advancement (MOJO Ad, 2015). Meeting those expectations may be key in managing integrated communications. The companies that are most successful at managing Millennials are those that understand the importance of setting clear targets and providing regular and structured feedback (Millennials at work, 2011).

Communication style. Throughout the observation period, some differences in communication style were noted. Generation X employees used more formal communication methods than the younger generation. These employees were observed to talk on the phone more frequently than their younger coworkers. They were also more likely to schedule a formal meeting to discuss projects, whereas the younger employees would informally gather at each other's desks. While both formal and informal communications have benefits, having no specified communication plan may be a disadvantage. Without clear communication and the team effort it permits, the successful completion of any important project can be jeopardized (Webster, 1992).

According to Harris and Nelson (2008), communication is one of the most dominant and important activities in organizations. With communication playing such a vital role, it should be structured and consistent. However, there was no accepted system in place for how tasks should be delegated, how feedback should be dispersed, how

questions should be raised and addressed, etc. For example, some employees would delegate tasks to their team members via email, while others would delegate the tasks verbally. This disconnected communication was not efficient. In order to effectively manage integrated communications, agencies need to employ clear and consistent communication processes.

A significant amount of industry jargon was also observed within the office throughout the observation period. The younger employees displayed a tendency towards using abbreviations, colloquialisms and industry jargon, more so than the older employees. This division isn't necessarily a bad thing. Using functional or organizational jargon can be an easy way to communicate ideas clearly for people who are fluent in those terms and acronyms (Moran, 2008). Older employees may not use abbreviations, colloquialisms and industry jargon as much as the Millennials do; however, as long as they understand it communication will still be effective.

Work expectations. This gap in behaviors by generation carries through work expectations as well. Employees that belong to Generation X appear to place more weight on hours spent in the office than younger employees do. This is reflected in their timesheets. These employees were observed filling out their timesheets on a daily basis, while younger employees tended to fill theirs out at the end of each week.

Millennials appeared to measure performance by results rather than hours. Their timesheets, while filled out less frequently, were more detailed. For example, a Generation X employee's timesheet may read, "Worked on Account XYZ, 2 hours. Worked on account ABC, 4 hours. Worked on Account QWE, 2.5 hours." While a Millennial's timesheet may read, "Write and publish a blog post for Client Z, 90 minutes.

Create a social media calendar for Client Z designed to increase brand recognition, 60 minutes. Launch Client G's PPC campaign to drive traffic to their website, 40 minutes." For these Millennials, emphasis is placed on the amount of tasks completed and the value of those tasks, rather than documenting how many hours were spent in the office.

To successfully manage integrated communications, employers need to take this shifting mindset into consideration. Currently, most employers encourage long hours and reward employees based on number of hours worked, rather the amount of productivity involved. But employees would prefer to be evaluated based on the value of their work rather than the amount of hours worked. Ninety-one percent of youths and young adults place high importance on their employer recognizing their value to the company (MOJO Ad, 2015).

This disconnect between the way employers measure the performance of their employees, and the way employees measure their own performance leads to disgruntled, inefficient employees. To combat this, managers should evaluate performance based on completed tasks and objectives, rather than hours spent the office

Training. Aside from two brand managers being sent to a content writing workshop in Chicago, very little formal training took place throughout the period of observation. However, there were many opportunities for informal training. These opportunities usually took the form of listening and observing others at work. For example, one brand manager was preparing to launch a press release using the PR Newswire. A brand coordinator asked if she could watch and learn how to do it, so they moved into the large conference room and utilized the overhead projector to walk through the process together step-by-step.

Only the younger employees appeared to take advantage of these opportunities. In the previously mentioned example, the brand manager announced to the office at large that she would be giving a brief example-based tutorial on how to use PR Newswire, and only two employees opted to sit in. Both of these employees were Millennials.

It could be theorized that the older employees already knew how to use PR Newswire, and therefore did not need the training. However, this hypothesis was disproven when one member of the PR team, a member of Generation X, announced that he was not familiar with the service. Despite a chance to benefit from the informal training, he declined the offer saying, "Well if you know how to do it, then that's good enough for me."

Millennial employees were frequently observed asking to sit in on meetings that they weren't required to attend. They seemed eager for any chance to learn new skills. According to Coopers (2008), Millennial employees have high expectations for being trained well, and they feel that this is a very important part of their experience.

The lack of formal training at this office may be detrimental since training and education have been shown to have a significant positive effect on job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Karia & Asaari, 2006). In order to effectively manage integrated communications, employers need to invest in continuous training. By providing opportunities for continued learning, employers are ensuring that their workers keep up-to-date on the latest industry trends and tools.

New technology. There was also an apparent failing in the way employees adapted to new technologies. Throughout the observation period, several technological changes took place within the office. For example, the agency switched email service

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providers from Outlook to Google. Many of the employees resisted this change. These employees were observed frequently complaining about the new email service and many continued to use their Outlook email address for several weeks after they were told to switch.

This resistance extended past the email service providers. Throughout the observation period, every time a new form of technology was introduced it met resistance. A second example is when the messaging app, Slack, was introduced to the office. Intended for all within-office communication, this app was supposed to increase efficiency, improve office organization and create quick turnaround on requests. However, many employees ignored the app altogether.

Integrated communications managers must work to help their agency absorb new technologies efficiently. First, managers should build up hype for the product, service or platform in question. It is important to make the benefits of the new technology visible to employees (Leonard-Barton & Kraus, 1985). According to Didier Bonnet, co-author of Leading Digital, employees need to understand why [the new technology] is an improvement from what they had before (Knight, 2015).

Second, integrated marketing managers must work to help their employees feel comfortable using the new technology. It is important to remember that familiarity with and interest in digital technology will vary widely among employees. Training efforts should reflect those differences (Knight, 2015). Some employees might prefer online training, and some might desire a workshop with hands-on learning. Managers need to take the time to determine what their employees want when it comes to digital technology training, and then provide it.

Individual Interviews

  Introduction. Key insights into the management of integrated communications were discovered using individual interviews. These interviews explored how practitioners define integrated communications, what obstacles are standing in the way of integration, how agencies can overcomes these obstacles, what role training plays in managing integrated communications and how agencies can best meet the training needs of employees.

  Analysis.

  Defining integrated communications. Overall, when asked to define integrated communications in their own words, all interviewees gave very similar answers. In every interview one of two ideas were conveyed. First that integrated communications means "different teams working together." (Participant B, personal communication, April 1, 2016) Second that integrated communications is a "blend between traditional marketing and digital marketing." (Participant D, personal communication, April 1, 2016) These ideas match what is found in literature surrounding integrated communications. According to Brand (2009), integrated methods aim for seamless integration of old and new techniques.

  Obstacles standing in the way of integration. When asked about the obstacles standing in the way of integration, participants gave several answers. The obstacle most frequently mentioned was the size of the agency. If true integrated communications is combining a variety of disciplines, agencies need to have team members that can speak to each discipline. The smaller an agency is, the more difficult it becomes to ensure that each specialty is covered. "I think internally the limitation is probably our size. While we

have staff members who are proficient in a variety of areas, we don't have a lot of depth in several of those areas. So I think our size can sometimes be a challenge to providing a full repertoire of integrated marketing communications." (Participant F, personal communication, April 4, 2016)

Another frequently mentioned obstacle was the size of the clients that mid-sized agencies serve. According to the interviewees, mid-sized agencies tend to attract smaller clients with limited budgets. These restrictive budgets prevent true integration, as they can only afford to utilize one or two services. "You can't always do a fully, crazy, digital experience if you're working with just a $500 out-of-pocket spend" (Participant D, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

The third obstacle mentioned was the organization of the agency. According to the participants, the agency must be organized in such a way as to allow different teams to work together. This can be difficult to achieve. "There can be a lot of confusion and resistance when employees aren't on the same page. If brand and digital have different ideas and don't communicate effectively, the final product will be sloppy." (Participant J, personal communication, April 5, 2016) However, the research interviews showed that once an agency found an effective way to organize itself, integration became a lot easier. "There's a lot of steps to make sure that the brand side and the digital side are working together effectively. It takes time to set everything up. Once you can set that backbone up though, then I think things flow better." (Participant B, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Research interviews found that the best way to effectively organize an agency is to use structured processes to keep things flowing smoothly. "I think right now, we have

to be flexible, but I think the ultimate goal is to have a very set process because that's where the internal balls are getting dropped." (Participant D, personal communication, April 1, 2016) Having consistent, organized processes that employees follow every time increases efficiency and cuts down on confusion. "It's a lot easier to get things done if you answer to a process versus answering to a person. If you know these are the steps that need to be taken every single time, you're not gonna have to reference someone above you to say, 'Hey, I just wanna make sure I'm doing this right,' because you'll know that you're doing it right." (Participant B, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Contributions to integration. According to the research interviews, there are many different factors that can contribute to successful management of integrated communications. First, the office layout should be considered. Research interviews show that agencies should consider an open-office floor plan. More and more companies are embracing open office layouts with the goal to improve communication, increase collaboration and cut back on overhead (Brown, 2015). In an industry that relies on communication and seamless teamwork for success, this approach may be particularly effective. "The environment that we work in is very open. While it can be distracting and noisy at times, I do think it does contribute to that integrated approach just by sharing of ideas and overhearing people working on something and then kind of piping in and offering to help. Just being aware of what others are working on I think is a positive thing." (Participant F, personal communication, April 4, 2016)

A 2013 Deloitte and Touche Human Capital survey showed that 95% of American CEOs felt that effective internal communication was very important to the success of an organization (Bassett, 2014). Similarly, the research participants agree that

internal communication plays a major role in successfully managing an agency. There are many different types of people that work at an integrated agency. With the large variety of jobs and roles come a large variety of personalities and work habits. Thus, communication between management and employees is critical. "I'd say that the success is having someone who can really understand how all those different types of people think and work and bring them together, communicate with them, and then kind of manage them when they go off and start doing their pieces." (Participant A, personal communication, March 30,2016)

This need for communication extends past the management. It's also essential that employees effectively communicate with each other. "I think a good communication between office people, members of the team making sure that everybody's on the same page and working towards that same goal. If everybody feels like they're on the same team, then everybody will be more apt to give each other some slack and work together along that path." (Participant B, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

While practitioners appear to agree that communication is an essential part of successfully managing integrated communications, its much easier said than done. In the previously mentioned Deloitte and Touche Human Capital survey of American CEOs, only 22% of CEOs surveyed said that they thought internal communication was being delivered effectively (Bassett, 2014). Research interviews showed that within an agency communication is often unorganized and chaotic. "Usually its off the cuff and kind of a free for all. Which might be unavoidable due to the fast-pace nature of this industry. Sometimes it's a problem when there's an dispute and its like I swear I sent that email but the person never got it." (Participant H, personal communication, April 5, 2016)

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Training. The first research question asked what is the role of training within an agency in managing an integrated approach? All participants unanimously agreed that training plays a vital role. The general benefits received from employee training are increased job satisfaction and morale, increased motivation, increased efficiencies in processes, resulting in financial gain, increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods, increased innovation in strategies and products and reduced employee turnover (Elnaga and Imran, 2013). The research participants expressed the belief that these benefits would hold true for mid-size integrated communication agencies. "I think that's how people individually develop and how we cross-pollinate ideas and share our own expertise." (Participant F, personal communication, April 4, 2016)

However, while all practitioners agreed training was important, they acknowledge that most small to mid-sized agencies fall short in this area. "I think that training is big and very important and it is not done enough in our industry" (Participant A, personal communication, March 30, 2016). The research interviews provided two explanations for this shortcoming.

According to the interviewees, there are two big obstacles standing in the way of training. "Smaller organizations have less money, less time." (Participant A, personal communication, March 30, 2016) Due to this lack of time and money, small to mid-sized integrated communications agencies often lack consistent, structured training programs.

Training takes up a lot of time no matter what type is used. Watching a tutorial video requires less time than attending a conference, but it is still takes away billable hours, which are crucial to most mid-sized agencies. "As an agency that bills our time and tracks our time, I think the natural push is to dedicate as much of your time in a week

towards billable account work. That wouldn't be training, right?" (Participant F, personal communication, April 4, 2016) Furthermore, asking employees to seek out individual training in their own time is not realistic. While all research participants acknowledged that they had an interest in training, they claimed it simply wasn't possible to train themselves as much as was necessary. "Time is a big thing. 'Cause personally, there's always things that I want to learn or take upon myself to do, but there's never enough time in the day." (Participant C, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

The second big obstacle to training is money. "Big corporations invest a lot in training programs since they promote from within a lot of the time. As a smaller agency, we don't have a ton of money to invest in training so we have to be more careful about where it goes." (Participant G, personal communication, April 5, 2016) According to a 2014 "State of the Industry" report by the Association for Talent Development, companies with less than 500 employees spend around $1,888 per employee on training, but it only translated to 27 (or fewer) hours (Casuto, 2015). Despite the obvious need for training, mid-sized integrated marketing agencies simply cannot afford to continuously provide training to all of their employees. This means that agencies need to be smart about how they allocate their training budget, by determining which employees and disciplines should get the most attention.

The second research question asked how can agencies utilizing an integrated approach best meet the training needs of employees. According to the research participants, in order to best meet the training needs of employees integrated communications agencies should focus on cross training.

Cross training involves teaching workers to perform job functions not included in their current job description and is practiced to maximize overall staff efficiency and flexibility (McKay, n.d.). This practice may be particularly useful within integrated communications agencies. Cross training helps employees to be agile when a client's needs change. It also allows employees to step up and fill in when another employee is ill, on vacation or quits unexpectedly. "With integrated campaigns teams overlap and employees might be asked to perform tasks outside of their skillset. Or members of one team might need to try and pitch another team's services to potential clients. I think cross-training is necessary to make sure all of our employees can speak to all disciplines at least a little bit to make sure there aren't any big fallouts." (Participant H, personal communication, April 5, 2016) Research interviews provided multiple examples of fallouts that occur due to lack of cross training. One involved members of the brand team not being cross-trained in design. After the brand team finished meeting with a client they returned to the office with tasks for the graphic designer, only to discover that what they had promised the client was not possible. If the brand team would have been cross-trained in the basics of design, this problem could have been avoided. "I think just understanding the basics of how it operates on both ends, like us understanding each other's jobs would make it a little easier." (Participant C, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

While all participants acknowledged the need for cross training, they did not agree on how the cross training should be provided. For example, some participants said they learn best by doing and would like to have time set aside for hands-on training in the office. "Sometimes if I watch someone else do it I think I get it, but then when I go and

try it on my own I can't remember how. I think it would be better to drive the training so I'm doing it while I learn." (Participant I, personal communication, April 5, 2016) There are multiple benefits to hands-on training. Hands-on training is a flexible training method that is immediately applicable to the trainee's job, and it allows the trainer to immediately determine whether the trainee has learned the new skill or not (Sisson, 2001).

Other participants expressed a desire to attend conferences and workshops. "I think conferences and workshops. I'm a visual learner and I need someone that's engaging enough." (Participant D, personal communication, April 1, 2016) There are also many benefits to attending conferences and workshops. They provide participants with renewed motivation, as well as the opportunity to learn new techniques, receive expert knowledge from top industry professionals and network (Morgan, n.d.).

It appeared that there was a connection between which type of training the participants preferred and their job within the agency. Members of the brand and PR teams expressed an interest in attending conferences and workshops while developers, graphic designers and digital specialists favored hands-on training. Employees in a management role expressed a need for both. "I would say maybe a combination of that. Conferences provide opportunities to hear some speakers, but hearing it is different than doing it. So I think you need to hear it at the conference, but then use webinars to start getting a little bit closer into how do I actually use that in my day to day job." (Participant E, personal communication, April 1, 2016)

Furthermore, some practitioners expressed that despite the obstacles small to mid-sized agencies might have an advantage when it comes to training. "While small companies may not have the time and the resources, what we do have is flexibility to try

just about anything. We can share ideas and try it and test it. We at least have a platform to allow people to try new things." (Participant E, personal communication, April 1, 2016) However, the research interviews showed that some uncertainty exists in regards to who should be responsible for implementing training programs.

The research interviews demonstrated that there is no widely accepted protocol on who should be responsible for professional development and training. While the responsibility could fall to managers, this option presents some drawbacks. "I've been in that situation before where I provide training but the employee isn't really interested. It ends up just being a waste." (Participant J, personal communication, April 5, 2016) There are also drawbacks to holding employees completely responsible for their own professional development and training. "From the top-down there has to be a kind of support for that. If employees are responsible for tracking and billing their time, they need a blessing from management to dedicate a certain amount of time to training." Without that support, employees would need to seek out and complete training in their own time, outside of work. As stated earlier in this paper, employees are expressing growing desire for work/life balance so expecting employees to put in extra hours is unrealistic.

The research participants conveyed the opinion that training needed to be both a top-down and a bottom-up approach in order for it to succeed. "I think it's honestly both probably. That sounds a little bit idealistic maybe, but I think definitely the first side of that is having managers provide that sort of mentorship and training. But I think that the individuals have to be receptive too and motivated to grow their own kind of knowledge.

So without both, I think it's a problem." (Participant F, personal communication, April 4, 2016)

In order for this top-down and bottom-up training approach to work, employees need to be enthusiastic about their roles and interested in further training. This means that for agencies to successfully manage integrated communications, they need to take great care in who they recruit and ultimately hire. "The goal of a company is to hire the right people who are naturally interested in these things and will continuously seek it out, learn and always develop themselves." (Participant A, personal communication, March 30, 2016)

Discussion

Findings. Multiple key insights were developed through the use of participant observation. First, managers should encourage employee collaboration. A balance between individual focus and team collaboration will move an agency more effectively towards its goals.

Second, managers should frequently provide structured feedback. Regular feedback is a critical component of a successful integrated communications agency and should be used in conjunction with setting performance goals. With steady feedback employees will not be working blindly, and they will be more effective in reaching the set goals.

Third, agencies need to establish clearly defined, consistent communication processes. Integrated communications agencies typically have multiple moving parts. It is vital that each team is able to communicate both amongst themselves and with other

teams successfully. Without clearly defined channels of communication, important tasks and insights may slip through the cracks.

Fourth, managers should evaluate performance based on completed tasks and objectives, rather than hours spent the office. It is important to set performance goals for employees and use those goals as a benchmark for evaluation. This way, employees feel confident that their work is appreciated and that they are not wasting time in the office that could be better spent elsewhere.

Fifth, managers need to invest in continuous education and training for their employees at all levels. Providing continuous training and development will lead to better job performance and increased job satisfaction.

Finally, integrated communications managers must work to help their agency absorb new technologies by explaining the benefits of the technology and providing digital technology training. This will allow agencies to stay up-to-date, efficient and innovative.

Multiple key insights were developed through the use of individual interviews as well. First, current practitioners define integrated communications as different teams working together to blend traditional marketing with digital marketing. Managers should emphasize this idea of teamwork and attempt to create an office culture that fosters collaboration. To do this, managers should consider utilizing an open-office floor plan.

Second, mid-sized integrated communications agencies must overcome multiple obstacles. Agencies must offset their limited size by making sure the staff they do have is sufficiently trained to provide a full repertoire of integrated services. They need to implement clear, easy-to-follow workflows to increase efficiency and ensure that each

task is completed to agency standards. Additionally, managers need to encourage communication in the office to guarantee that everyone is on the same page and working toward the same goal.

Third, training plays a vital role in managing an integrated approach. Agencies need to be smart about how they allocate their training budget in order to overcome the obstacles of time and money. The majority of training budgets should be dedicated to cross training through conferences, workshops and hands-on training sessions.

Finally, managers need to take great care in who they recruit and ultimately hire. In order to successfully manage integrated communications, employees need to be self-motivated to continue learning and bettering themselves. Only then will self-directed, hands-on training be effective.

Significance. This research serves to fill gaps in the literature surrounding integrated communications. It expands on the current knowledge by applying it to real-world situations and determining which theories hold true. With regard to managing integrated communications, the research establishes a best practices model that practitioners can benefit from following, especially in terms of training.

Limitations. There were some disadvantages to participant observation that must be addressed. First, participant observation was time consuming. The restraints on my time limited my ability to get a holistic understanding of the day-to-day activities in the agency. However, I tried to remain focused on my research questions in order to get the necessary information in a short period of time. Second, it was difficult to document the data. It was hard to keep track of everything that was important and I had to largely rely on my memory.

There were also a few cons to conducting individual interviews. First, my lack of experience as a moderator was a disadvantage. It was difficult for me to develop strong questions, create a comfortable interview environment and build a good rapport with the interviewees. This may have limited the information I received. I compensated for my lack of experience with thorough preparation and practice. Second, individual interviews did not allow me to reach a very large sample size. This sample size may make it difficult for my conclusions to be applicable to the industry at large.

Directions for future research. Future research could look more closely at the topics of working remotely and flex scheduling. Practitioners have stated there is a need to determine how these options can be utilized successfully within an integrated communications agency. Additionally, future research can add to the literature by conducting research at large integrated marketing agencies and discovering if the same findings apply.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

MU Institutional Review Board
University of Missouri-Columbia

February 12, 2016

Principal Investigator: Cassie Hewitt Dwyer
Department: Journalism

Your Exempt Application to project entitled Role of Training in Managing an Integrated Communication Approach was reviewed and approved by the MU Institutional Review Board according to the terms and conditions described below:

IRB Project Number	2014533
IRB Review Number	211394
Initial Application Approval Date	February 12, 2016
IRB Expiration Date	February 12, 2017
Level of Review	Exempt
Exempt Categories	45 CFR 46.101b (2)
Risk Level	Minimal Risk
Internal Funding	Personal funds

The principal investigator (PI) is responsible for all aspects and conduct of this study. The PI must comply with the following conditions of the approval:

1. No subjects may be involved in any study procedure prior to the IRB approval date or after the expiration date.
2. All unanticipated problems, adverse events, and deviations must be reported to the IRB within a days.
3. All changes must be IRB approved prior to implementation unless they are intended to reduce immediate risk.
4. All recruitment materials and methods must be approved by the IRB prior to being used.
5. The Annual Exempt Form must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval at least 30 days prior to the project expiration date. If the study is complete, the Completion/Withdrawal Form may be submitted in lieu of the Annual Exempt Form.
6. Maintain all research records for a period of seven years from the project completion date.
7. Utilize all approved research documents posted within the attached files section of eCompliance. These documents are highlighted green.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB at 573-882-9181 or irb@missouri.edu.

Thank you,

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Researcher's Name: Cosette Dwyer

Project Number: 2004538

Project Title: Role of Training in Managing an Integrated Communication Approach

INTRODUCTION

This consent may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the investigator or the study staff to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand.

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being conducted to explore the role that training plays for employees whose agencies are utilizing an integrated communication approach. This information is especially important to agencies working in fields such as advertising and public relations to understand how to successfully manage an integrated approach. Participation in this study is voluntary.

Participation is voluntary. You can stop participating at any time without penalty. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that you prefer not to answer. If you choose to withdraw from the research study, please inform the researcher of your decision to withdraw. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

This study will utilize participant observation and individual interviews. In participant observation the researcher will participate in the ongoing activities and record observations. The participant observation portion of this study will last approximately 3 months. Next, individual interviews will be conducted with willing participants. Each interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

You may ask more questions about the study at any time. For questions about the study, contact Cosette Dwyer at (618) 806-6677 or supervising professor Jon Stemmle at (573) 882-6225 (office). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the University of Missouri Campus Institutional Review Board (which is a group of people who review the research studies to protect participants' rights), 483 McReynolds, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211, (573) 882-9585 or umcresearchcirb@missouri.edu.

Benefits and Risks of being in the Study: The risk in participating in this study is no greater than what would be expected in a daily conversation about similar topics and there should be no potential risk in participating.

Privacy and Confidentiality: If you choose to participate your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. Any sort of report made public will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My verbal assent means that I do want to be in the study. I know that I can remove myself from the study at any time without any problems.

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1) How long have you been working in the industry?

    A. And what is your current job title or role?

2) In your own words, how would you define integrated communications? [Prompt: The application of consistent brand messaging across both traditional and non-traditional marketing channels. Using different promotional methods to reinforce each other.]

3) Using that as a working definition, would you say this agency is integrated?

    A. What is the biggest obstacle to integration that mid-sized agencies such as yours face?

    B. What do you think contributes to successful integration at mid-sized agencies like this one?

4) What role does training play in managing integrated communications?

5) What obstacles stand in the way of professional development and training at mid-sized integrated marketing agencies?

6) In terms of training, which areas should be top priority? [Prompt] If you could choose your top 3 priority topics for employee training for your agency/team as a whole this year, what would they be?

7) How would you like this training to be provided? [Prompt: courses, programs, conferences, online, return to school]

    A. What is most important to you in regards to training and professional development? [Prompt: Accessibility? Cost? Timing? Topics?]

APPENDIX D

Interview Transcripts

Participant A

Interviewer: How long have you been working in the industry?

Participant A: About 30 years, I started in 1985 and 86. So, 31 years I guess.

Interviewer: What were your main roles throughout your career?

Participant A: I, when I got out of college I actually got a fellowship to work with a professor on a book that he was working on in an exhibition in a museum. And at a certain point I started working on all the media relations dealing with stuff. At that time it was mainly the New York Times, which did a big story about this exhibition. I said oh I kinda like that work better than I Interviewer: So, eventually you made your way to working at an integrated agency or owning an integrated agency.

Participant A: Not exactly.

Interviewer: Not exactly?

Participant A: I mean, you know, thirty years ago there weren't integrated agencies really. So, you know, there were PR agencies, there were ad agencies, there were promotions agencies, there were lots of very specialized firms. Yeah, and it wasn't, it wasn't entirely, there were some bigger firms really growing that had lots of things, lots of different marketing disciplines. But more often than not, you know, you worked on one side of the business or the other. So I started to work in the public relations business. And it was really just it was somewhere in, I would say the early 90's when, you know, when it really started to take off. And early 90's let me think, somewhere in the 90's. And so at that time we were working for a client called Compaq, and we were very interested in what the Internet was. You know ironically in some ways before and they were a computer company, so we were, you know, we were able to see pretty quickly that if the internet took off that it would become another form of media. At the time, you know, they didn't even see that, and so that's kind of how in my world it became integrated. It was, you know, we were doing media relations, we were doing public relations. And then all of the sudden the internet came around and it was like well that would sort of became part of it and then, you know, social media started, you know, obviously much later but that started to happen. And we said this is kind of all public relations. And now, you know, whether it's Internet, or web, or social media whatever - agencies do it. The integrated agencies do it and web agencies do it. So in many ways it's becoming, the integration has taken literally like 30 years to happen.

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Interviewer: So, how would you, in your own words, define integrated communications, or integrated marketing?

Participant A: For me integrated communications is about being agnostic to any particular media form and seeing what is the best way to reach the target audience with the right message in a way that they want to consume the message. So I think that's always been the challenge. But when I started in the business, you know, you could find 15 million people watching prime time television or 200 million or whatever the number was. And there were times in history when 200 million people listened to like a Sunday evening radio program, or would watch, you know, the wonderful world of Disney on Sunday night or, you know, whatever. And there are very few things that can get that large of an audience anymore. It may be the super bowl or something. And so, you know, for me it's just been a constant evolution and the integrated part is, well if you're trying to, let's say you've only dealt with media relations today and your clients said okay we need to reach Millennials and the only tools that we had available to us was like going to newspapers and television. You know the truth is that it would be very difficult to reach the millennial audience. So if you're not integrating. I would say integrated marketing is really, you could say it another way it's evolutionary marketing, right? And that unless you are evolving with the forms of communication then you simply are doing your craft but you may only be able to reach part of the audience. In which case the client, you

know, is forced to have multiple agencies for reaching multiple parts. And that's highly inefficient, in fact very expensive to do.

Interviewer: And maybe creates more inconsistent campaigns across the board?

Participant A: Right, right well, you know, in some ways yes in some ways no. So, you know, if you have multiple groups trying to accomplish the same thing, you know, there's room for error and inconsistencies. The other argument would be well you can't really develop a campaign for Millennials that's the same as for Baby Boomers and have it be the same words, the same tactics, the same anything because they think and act it differently. So, you know, a truly integrated effort would be, you know, a team organized in a way where it's doing slightly different things for those different audiences. But then working together to understand okay well what are you doing, what are we doing, how do we make it all, you know, work together? Even though the message may be a little bit different, the medium is a little bit different but how do we make it so that, you know, at Thanksgiving dinner when the kids and parents get together and they're talking about why they love, you know, a product or an idea they're all using similar words and phrases so that, you know, you're pretty clear the message got through.

Interviewer: Would you say that your agency is integrated?

Participant A: Yeah, I mean that's the challenge I'd say of the industry has been saying the word integration is as much a dream as it is anything else. And that clients have been they want to buy integration but they're typically not integrated themselves. Agencies, baby agencies that say integration may have all the pieces but people don't actually integrate they play keep away from each other. Meaning, you know, let's say you work for a big agency, and you work for a big client, and you're trying to do integrated communications and, you know, there's different teams in different parts of the country that do different things. And, you know, everyone says oh let's play together and let's do all this then maybe someone who's the master of the whole program, but if you've never worked in a big agency you realize that, you know, New York is trying take over the world, then this ones trying to take something form them and they're all just trying to keep their piece of the pie. And so human nature, and then this is kind of after all these years I can tell you that, you know, integration is very difficult to accomplish at times. There were times, you know, for twist, I'd say that, you know, being small and nimble is an advantage. But we didn't have enough people necessarily at any one time to have all the skillsets to fully integrate everything. That's why, you know, we chose to work for smaller midsized companies and brands because the work that they needed from us, we were able to do. And to do in a fairly integrated way, you know, if we would've gone after bigger clients and let's say that we could get them they would say, oh can you do X, Y and Z and we'd be able to do X and Y but not Z, and therefore wouldn't fully be integrated so.

Interviewer: So for a midsized agency, what do you think the biggest obstacle to integration is?

Participant A: You know I'd say the cynical side of me after being around for 30 years says human nature, you know, sometimes prevents true integration. And I don't mean that by agencies, I don't mean that just by clients but, you know. So for example, clients who say, we want to do an integrated program. That means they have to get all the different parts of their organization, you know, the people who develop the products, the people who, the lawyers, the spokespeople, the management team. Everyone who's agreed to a direction, well getting anyone to agree to everything, you know? You can watch, you know, our current state of politics, it's very hard to get people to all agree. So let's say they can agree on the marketing program, then, you know, as the agency you have to put all the pieces together and, you know, sometimes people within the agency don't fully agree so, you know. I was in a meeting yesterday and it was taking about how we're going to roll out the next phase of the Coleman project with the Shake Shack and, you know, this building and, you know, I come in and say well, you know, yeah I think we can do this media event and here's what it looks like and sounds like and John is responsible for the media side. So I was like, you know, that's never going to work. Then say, you know, you just kind of, you're always in a constant state of trying to push an idea bigger and on the other side kind of make sure that it's not pushed too big so that you can't execute it right so, it's always a, and that's the hardest thing about marketing.

Marketing is it has to be more than what you can, it's not just about doing the obvious, right. It's not about doing what, you know, will work, because in today's world that almost doesn't get any notice. You have to do something that's new, and different, and bigger, and better to break through. And when you do things that are new and different, bigger and better to break through there's a higher chance of failure. So you're always living somewhere between, you know, the thinking big and the fear of it not working. Which, you know, I would say is a, for career marketing people, you know, it's a stressful business because, you know, if you present an idea that's already been done, everyone's like oh yeah these guys aren't creative if you present something. They, they're like okay great, are you going to be able to do it, you know, and you have to believe that you can do it right, if you don't believe it then. …You know, and you have to believe that you can do it, right? If you don't believe it, then it's possible to do it. And then once you believe it, you've got to then… You've got to follow through and even if you follow through it still has to work. So it takes a great deal of… a fair amount of risk taking, you know, balanced with people who will challenge the idea just so that if you challenge it and then everyone agrees, okay, we can do this, we can get this done, it's risky but we can get it done. And then I'll focus on it and that's when those great moments happen. But, you know, it's 30 years of my career. The night before a certain program's kicked off or a week before, I just did not get sleep. You know, it's your… you're just nervous, you're like, what happens when no one shows up? What happens if…? And that's the nature of the business. But when it does work and people show up, then it goes off as planned. There's a real high, you know, big adrenaline rush and you just feel like, yes, I knew it was going to work!

Interviewer: So, what do you think contributes to successful integrative campaigns in an agency?

Participant A: I'm going to try to answer that first and telling you what doesn't work and kind of what does work. So, the hardest part, well, one of the hardest parts of an integrated firm is it requires very different types of people to do it. So if we were just a media of relations and pitch stories for television for example, they would all… everyone would be kind of similar. They would've had television background, they would come from a journalism or producing the employment or a background, and they kind of all think and function very similar. And managing people who think and function in very similar way isn't that hard, you know? It's easy to understand, it's easy to predict and it's easy to communicate. But when you have people who are doing media relations and you have people who are thinking about like, they're more like consultants and they're thinking about the brain, then you have people who are doing social media and people who are designing things. You know, you can walk around and some have headphones, and some people are talking a lot, and some people are introverts, and some people are extroverts, and there's all different types. And so getting those different types to all truly function together and enjoy functioning together is very hard. I would say that in my role, historically, and obviously my role is changing, right now kind of more, going off into the sunset in some ways. But my role, I always enjoyed the diversity of the town, right? So I like the introverts, I like the extroverts, I like the way everyone thought and so it's

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exciting to kind of work on an idea, on a project. And, you know, my job most of the time was translating. So here's the idea that I could translate it in five or six different ways so that each group kind of understood how to work. So that's kind of the background. So, you know, the question is what's the inhibitor or…?

Interviewer: What do you think contributes to successful integration?

Participant A: So, I'd say that the success is having someone who can really understand how all those different types of people think and work and bring them together, communicate with them, and then kind of manage them when they go off and start doing their pieces. Because it's a very, it's human nature, it's kind of back to this human nature thing. Everyone tends to work in the way that they feel comfortable with. So, you know, if someone who puts headphones on like zones out into their work every day, if they sit next to someone who's talking to the client, they don't even hear what they're talking about and so they don't pick up anything through the day of maybe how they should adapt to what the client's needs are or what's going on. And, you know, then you get to this point at the end of the week where you're reviewing the design and it's like "but didn't you hear we were talking about that?" and the designer's like "I didn't hear anything." You know, so I would say the hardest thing right now is… I think the thing that you need is someone who's a very good translator, someone who likes that, who doesn't get fully frustrated with it. I would say that I was, it is very frustrating. Managing

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integrated teams, it's very rewarding but it's also frustrating to get everyone to function together. Yet, at the same time, I know that like that dream everyone has of like these integrated marketing programs can't exist without people working together. You know, I think every day that the explosion of smartphone applications, it's like there's an application for everything, right? But almost nothing ties it all together. So, and why does that matter? It's a big thing. I mean, it's… All our financial software has our clients loaded in it but it doesn't speed to our database, so we have to load our clients in again. And then, you know, our email marketing software doesn't tie to either of those things so it has to be tied in, it has to be shared again. And so, the list of all the people that you're trying to communicate with has to be loaded, reloaded and loaded again, and whatever. And most of the time it doesn't share and so when that changes, how do you kind of change it across all of them? And you know, well, in some ways we've advanced so far in the marketing world but we're back to ground zero in so many other ways. And that there is a period where it was like that probably in the 70's and then in the 80's and 90's it started to became more integrated with technology and then the technologies changed and it's kind of less integrated again in some ways, in other ways it's more integrated. And so it's hard, it's hard.

Interviewer: Do you think in order to successfully manage an integrated agency there needs to be clear, structured processes in place? Or should managers try to personalize workflows for different employees?

Participant A: I think both can work, I think the one thing that we're experiencing, I don't think it's just us but I think it's the entire industry, is that there's a lot of downward pressure on pricing. So, you know, it was maybe 5 years ago the average hourly fee for a certain senior level person was, maybe it was $250 dollars an hour, maybe $300 dollars an hour. I'd say it's less today. And so, because of that, everything that you're doing you don't have as much time to do it. They want you to do more for less. And so when you have to do more for less, it's hard to have personalized approaches for everything, right? Because if every time, if the best way to do it were to have like a group touch base meeting once a day on a certain client, the client will start to say, you know, "Why did I pay 6 hours every day for you guys to meet?" And so they didn't want to pay it. So then the other approach that you suggested is having more process and tools like basecamp and things like that to keep people tied up together. And I believe that that's the way to do it today, but I'm continually reminded back to all the different ways people work. That it's like creating cats, you know. Some of your best people, even your most senior people, who should be the most flexible, the most experienced, and the most flexible aren't. So getting, I don't know, getting Heather to focus in basecamp or someone else may be a challenge. And because she's really good at keeping it all together and sharing ideas and maybe she grew up in her career through email. Well, email is actually a terrible tool. You know, it's just like sending people things, they get lost, it's hard to remember. So, yeah, either will work. I think the more complicated work becomes the more… the more process that's needed, the more process that's integrated, the more it dumbs it down in some ways. And, you know, smart people and creative people often resist process. So, it's a bit of a catch-22.

Interviewer: What role do you think training plays in managing integration successfully?

Participant A: I think training is big and very important and it is not done enough in our industry. Probably more of it is done at the big companies because they depend more on hiring from within, and their bet is that they have a longer, it's not always true, but they can someone come into the organization and let's say on average are there for 5 years, well, then there's a training program to kind of get them in, kind of maximize that to those 5 years and then maybe they leave. Smaller organizations have less money, less time, they don't have as much time to invest it in that and people probably stay less time. So the smaller organizations have to typically have more experienced people who need less training. So for someone new coming in, the good part is you can work with some people who, you know, who know how to do it already, but the bad thing is you don't necessarily get training programs. So that's the way you can think of it from the company perspective. The other thing that's going on is training used to be something that, unless the company did it, it was impossible to achieve any of it. Well, you know, we now live in a world where if you want to Google something on how to build a WordPress website, you can probably watch a video on how to do it and do it yourself. So, training is a lot more self-directed and so for the person who wants training and development, it's all out there. So that then ultimately becomes, you know, I would argue, some others would argue for this or against this that the goal of a company is to hire the right people who are naturally interested in these things and will continuously seek it out, learn, and always

develop themselves. If you can test people kind of coming in and make sure you have those people, then you don't need training programs as much, you just hire people who are very self-motivated. Or in the case where you say, you know, I don't need self-motivated people, they leave sooner, so we want to have people who are less motivated but train them more. That's another way to do it. And so that kind of keeps them attached to the mothership. And I think there's examples of all these kinds of different ways in, you know, like whatever it is. I mean, they're big and they struggle to get the right talent so they create it from within more. And so they have much more training than the average company.

Interviewer: What areas would you think should be top priority for an agency that is hoping to become more integrated?

Participant A: Well, so let's start at 30-thousand-foot level. So the agency world consists of people who are creative, right? And people who are business minded, more of the account managers. And now I'd say people who are more technical and analytics. So, you know, I think it's important for creatives to realize that they need to become more analytical so that their creativity is easier to measure. In the past, if they just came up with something really funny or it was like really clever, that was like really good and the client was like "awesome, we won an award!" Now the client is, you know, interested in, okay, benchmarking that against how they did before, how their industry is doing, did it

drive more people? Were those people able? Did they convert from interest to sales? Or whatever. And so, you know, the creatives have to come up with creativity that can be measured, otherwise they may be with really great stuff that no one cares about. I would say the technical people have to have more appreciation for the creative, right? Just because it's technical and it functions really well and they can drive people in certain ways, unless you're inspired, then it kind of doesn't matter either. And I know that business people are probably caught in the middle of both, you know, and so they have to be very flexible in how they see the world. So it's, you know, there's this 10 or 20-year gap of the industry changing from the way it was to the way it will be, where it feels a little bit conky. You know, you just feel… you just kind of want to, you know, the older people to get the new world and you want the younger people to, sorry, the older people to get the new way of doing things, you want the younger people to kind of understand where it was and how to kind of make a transition into it without thoroughly upsetting everything. And it's going to take 20 years to do it, you know? I just don't think it will happen overnight.

Interviewer: Would you qualify that as crossing training?

Participant A: Yeah, I mean, I think cross training is what you need to do when you need everyone to get along. I think right now it's not clear yet. The world may be ready for like the new generation of people to kind of like do marketing in totally radical new ways

and none of the old stuff is relevant, it's not clear yet. You know, someone said… In a client meeting someone said, "I don't think anyone reads anymore." I don't know, I mean, is that true? I think they read in new ways, you know? She may have been, and she was young, I mean, but she may have been saying that no one reads papers or magazines or those things. I can't believe that she meant that no one reads, I'm just saying that maybe reading on like iPads. And so, then it's the question of them digging deeper into it as, okay, well, the New York Times used to write or different magazines would write very long formed articles, long. They would start and they'd go to other pages and keep going and maybe what she's saying is that people don't read as long, and therefore you need to shorten things. Or, you know, maybe it means that an article is really short and then that it's embedded in a video. So it's kind of two things. I don't know that anyone fully knows the answer to that yet. So it's changing, so the cross training, yes, I think it's really important but maybe, as I kind of answered your question, I think the answer is… and I don't think we did that much of it, but in the past we hired as much on gut as anything else. I think that you… Learned a lot from science. And psychology and things like that but there are some very strong predictive, testing that can, you know, determine how do people think and do those people think in ways that are complementary to the group. And I would say that more of that needs to be done. Because it's very expensive to hire people and have them leave, and it's very expensive for people to think of their career as in like two or three year stents. The latest statistic that I heard it's like when my parents where in business, you know, they were told that they may have like one job change like in their career in average, maybe it was like 1.6 or something. And so, you know, people stayed a long time, they got like, you know, they were trying to be their

tenures, twenty years, thirty years, get the gold watch kind of thing. Retire from that place. When I started in business, you know, people said that, you know, you would have three job changes. And so I was like, okay, well if you're going to work, you know, let's say 40 years, you know, you would stay 10, 12 years a place and, you know, that was your career. Now you think, like our generation it's like 8 or, you know, more. It's like, and the way of working is different so you don't really see staying in a place a long time. You kind of gain experiences and then you kind of move on. And maybe you don't even stay in the same industry, and maybe you work the 4 people work for organizations and companies and wanted to build them and like where the place was, and what it looked like and, you know, how the kind of realization went in the middle of the day was very important. Well it's changing, you know, more people work at home, more people want to have these flex schedules of maybe working at home, maybe working in the office. Walking into an office as, you know, with not that many people there on some days is weird. And, you know, walking into companies even that are packed full like Google, you know, they have these big long tables with like computers on both sides of the desks and people have their headphones on and, you know, there's less community. There's more people but there's less community. So it's hard to know how it will work. You know I think that in the future, I personally think that there's going to be producers in our business. The producer is someone who can know the client, understand the industry, kind of know all the pieces that need to come together, know where to find those pieces whether they're in the same office or they're distributed around the world. Kind of assign those things, have the pieces come in, assemble it, and kind of develop successful programs. And you could see some of that working right now, I mean we're

experimenting with some design software where you kind of upload the brief and, you

know, there's a project manager who assigns it to a designer. And the designer

communicates with the client and then poof, like it shows up and you give them

feedback. Each of those, I don't know if, I've convinced none of those people are in the

same room they may not even work for the same company but they're working as a team.

So teams won't change, they'll be in the past they were loyal to each other because they

worked of the same company. Now they think, you know, team loyalty will be based on,

you know, just being able to do god work with each other, but not necessarily see each

other, touch each other, you know, drink coffee together. But, you know, through living

in these virtual worlds, I think they'll be more virtual companies.

Interviewer: So to successfully manage integrated communications there needs to be

flexibility?

Participant A: Very flexible, and technologically flexible. Because, you know, if you're,

now I think the world is diverse enough. So they're be every kind of company but I mean

there's more companies today that I see as virtual. You know, the thing that I think a lot

about, I mean this isn't really I'm not teaching you anything about kind of the agency

business but I mean I can go to more companies and where there are very few people it

seems to me that occupy the space that they pay for. I mean so there's a client that we're

pitching it's a multibillion-dollar company and, you know, we go there and there's

literally hundreds of empty desks. I don't think that people don't work there, I just think that the way they work is different. I've walked into and, you know, they have all these floors and it's like no one's ever there. They're out with clients, they work from home, they're on trips, they do all kinds of things and, you know, they stay connected not by place, they stay connected by the tools. And at a certain point, you know, one of the things that's probably the biggest expense in business is, you know, real estate and furniture and all that stuff.

Interviewer: Cutting down on those overhead costs?

Participant A: Yeah and I, you know, I don't know. I don't know the answer to it I would say there's people who, you know, come and want more of a community, and then there's people who are like I want to work from home. You know it's hard, I think that's, you know, and maybe it seems hard to me because I'm like in this, I'm living in this bubble this transitory time, like I'm not so old where, you know, I'm the old guy who doesn't know how to use the technology, you know, or anything like that. And I'm not the young person who's just like getting into it, so I can see both and I could see that it's kind of clunky, kind of transitioning or working with both. So maybe it's my awkwardness feeling it, on the other hand I can't imagine that, you know? I think the older people kind of feel it and I think the younger people kind of feel the clunkiness too, you know? I don't think we'll ever be able to find one strict like these are best practices that you

should always follow in every case. I think the best working environments have always been for me, have always been, you know, the newer generation coming in kind of brings their own new skills and new attitude but always has, you know, good appreciation. They're kind of old souls in some ways and they have a good appreciation for what it is and they've like worked around that or those kind of people and so that they don't, you know, they don't just throw…

Interviewer: What do you look for in a job candidate that signifies they might be a good fit in that aspect?

Participant A: I think there's a way to do that, you know, and a certain kind of testing you can find those things out more or so. Not by asking the question directly but it think by asking a series of questions that people answer, you know, more or less truthfully you can do it. I mean I've taken a test where it was maybe, I think it was 17 multiple choice questions. Fill it out, takes very little time and, you know, they put it into a computer it comes out and says here is a report on you and it was like shockingly accurate. It says here is kind of the way you think, and how you work and all these things it was like, you know, how can that be? And then I think the answer is because, you know, we all think we're incredibly unique. But, you know, I think there's, I think people are specialized in that now that there's certain ways people are and certain ways that they're not, and they know how to pretty much determine who you are so. I wish I had done more on that.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Participant A: Look up the term predictive index which is one I think is really cool right now. I think that's a 17 question one, and, you know, it thinks you can probably go online and take it for free or do something. I just think you'd be shocked.

Participant B

Interviewer: How long have you been working in the industry?

Participant B: I have been here for a year, and I was a social media/marketing intern prior to graduation, so about a year and a half.

Interviewer: And what is your current job title or role?

Participant B: I am a content strategist.

Interviewer: In your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant B: I would define it as different teams working together, so social media, email marketing, the content person, and the graphics design team working together. Or for a website design, I would say it would be the developer and the brand person working together, I think, to kind of create that entire feel of the brain, you gotta have two pieces.

Interviewer: Using that as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant B: Yes. Yes. Definitely with the email marketing that we do, social media that we do, the website updates and builds, obviously we're all one team. But there are different departments that have to come together to integrate and reach that end goal.

Interviewer: Do you think that there's room for the agency to become more integrated?

Participant B: Yeah, I'd say so. In what ways is what I'm trying to think of how to describe it. As an agency grows, I think you'll need more integration. I think we do a pretty good job of it. But as we get more clients and as there's more things that need to be done, it's going to be more than just person to person, it's gonna be team to team. I think the communication will have to be more streamlined versus our walk-bys, or quick note offs. I think maybe a little bit more of a process will help that grow a bit.

Interviewer: What obstacles stand in the way of integration right now?

Participant B: Probably the biggest obstacle would be time, making sure that there's enough time. There's a lot of steps to make sure that the brand side and the digital side are working together effectively. It takes time to set everything up. Once you can set that backbone up though, then I think things flow better. But whenever there's a lot to do and everybody is rushing around, sometimes that first backbone step gets missed, and then it's just a hot-fire item of, "I need this image," or, "I need this website update." Yeah. What was the question?

[chuckle]

Interviewer: Any obstacles that stand in the way.

Participant B: Yeah. Okay. Yes. Time. [chuckle] Time and structure, I guess. Making sure to stick to that structured process.

Interviewer: On the opposite end, do you think there's anything that contributes to the integration?

Participant B: I think a good communication between office people, members of the team making sure that everybody's on the same page and working towards that same goal. If everybody feels like they're on the same team, then everybody will be more apt to give each other some slack and work together along that path.

Interviewer: What role does training play in managing an integrated communications agency?

Participant B: Yeah. I think it depends on what the training is. I think obviously knowing your exact role is important, but training on how those processes go, entering in if we have a website builder, if we have an e-blast, knowing the first step is, me as the brand person, pulling the images, getting the copy together, and then okay we're gonna have a kick-off with the graphic designer and collaborate. I'll enter it into base camp. We've got one round of edits and then we send to the client, really making sure we follow those steps. What was the question?

Interviewer: What kind of role does training play?

Participant B: Yes. So knowing how to follow... See how I like to get off on tangents? Knowing how to follow all those processes I think is really, really important. Obviously, training someone on this is the way that we do things, It's a lot easier to get things done if you answer to a process versus answering to a person. If you know these are the steps that need to be taken every single time, you're not gonna have to reference someone above you to say, 'Hey, I just wanna make sure I'm doing this right,' because you'll know that you're doing it right. Clear, secure training definitely keeps that moving.

Interviewer: If you could pick three areas – where could a mid-sized agency really benefit from training?

Participant B: One, I would say definitely on the tech side of making sure you're always on trend and maintaining on what's going on to make sure that everybody on the team is trained in the best way for all the programs that we do use. So when someone comes on, I think it would be beneficial to say, "Okay, you're gonna be working on Sprout Social." Not just, "Let me show you how to do it," but, "Here's a tutorial on how it all works." And even if someone doesn't necessarily absorb all of it, they're gonna watch it and it's gonna be easier for them to master that, similar to Cision. Any of the programs that we use, starting off with that initial training of those programs, I think leads for easier go-through whenever tasks get delegated. I think too, a training on how the process works just from person to person, so, "This is what this person does, this is what this person does, and this is what your role is, and this is how X task gets done between everybody." That way everybody's in the know of, "I need to send it to so and so prior to sending it out," instead of, "Do I need to send this anybody before I blast it out?" or those type of things. So obviously knowing the backbone of how to use the things that you're using, but also how to follow the process, training on that. Let me think, any another training. I mean, maybe even team-building training with an integrated marketing or integrated any type of company, you need to kind of understand how to work with a team and work with your co-worker even if they're getting on your nerves. Or if you're stressed out and having a bad day, I think it helps to kind of have training on how to hear what people are saying and be receptive and open.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for implementing that training?

Participant B: I think it's a combination of both, bottom-up and top-down. I think it's important for, at the top, them to focus on maybe that team-building type situation, whereas on the bottom, you know what you're doing. I know what programs I use for email marketing and I know what I'm doing for social media. So if I come across something like, "This is a new trend," and I'm in it every day, I'm going to be able to recognize there's a big social media conference coming up, I should flag that to a senior member and see if we can attend. Likewise for the team-building, I think from the top-down, it's important for them to kind of recognize that processes work based on people and the way that a team works, so for them to kind of take that training and run with it. I think it could go either way, but for the most part.

Interviewer: Is there anything, specifically, you look for in job candidates that might signal that they are a self-motivated learner?

Participant B: I think for me a big thing is obviously people want experience, but it's really important for someone to have a positive attitude. If someone comes in and I can tell they're very bright and receptive, and they're excited about it, it's not necessarily an extra curriculars. But if you can just tell that they have a passion for anything, that they're kind of a passionate person, I think that that kind of reads through into their work life. So obviously, like I said, experience is important, but when someone comes in and they're like, "I'm a go-getter, and I'm always trying to stay on the latest trends." And if they say, "I know I might not have the best experience, but I'm ready to hit the ground running. I

think kind of being able to tell when someone's feeding you what you want to hear versus being genuine, you kind of have to be careful there. But for the most part, I think getting a good read on someone's personality can definitely pave the way for a job or an internship.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on persaonlity testing when it comes to recruitment? Is that something agencies should consider?

Participant B: I think it would be helpful 'cause every office needs a balance. You don't wanna have everybody that has no experience and is super-motivated because just 'cause they're super-motivated doesn't mean that they're experienced. We still need kind of that back pushing, so you need a balance of those kind of type A people that are ready to kneel down, and those other crazies that are kind of off in la-la land but you can pull them back in. So yeah, I think it would definitely be useful to kind of not make it something so serious, but kind of integrate it as in, "This is something fun that we do. We just like to get to know our applicants." And in doing so, you can utilize it and say, "Alright, the office is way too serious right now. We need someone that is upbeat and lively and gonna bring the energy up in here." Or maybe on the opposite side, you've got so many people that have high-energy, it would be refreshing to have someone that's a little more subdued and can just hit that ground running with the experience they have.

Interviewer: Do you think managers should utilize clear, set processes? Or should workflows be more customized to fit each individual employee?

Participant B: For the sake of like craziness in the agency lifestyle, I would say the same process, because that makes it just easier all around. If someone goes on vacation, the other person that's on their team, like you were saying, kind of in if we were in a bigger agency and we had a bunch of team members, if we're all kind of segmenting and using different processes, if so and so goes on vacation for a week or we get a new account so you have to take this one over, that kind of learning curve, just takes away efficiency. So I think it's... Efficiency is kind of the key word there, like having that streamline process. And I think knowing how to speak to those digital, the web developers, the graphic designers, understanding their process while building that main background is important, but keeping one streamlined I think would be the best way to go.

Interviewer: What about channels of communication? Should those be set or is there room for more flexibility?

Participant B: I think communication can go a little bit off, not off the radar, but a little bit off the path in a bigger... When you've got like a ton going on, you might not have the ability to get up and go and walk and ask someone, so I think it's all about the atmosphere as well. If everybody is in different offices, or if the building is huge and the graphic designer is all the way upstairs and it's gonna take me three minutes to get there, it might be easier to pick up the phone or do like a Slack message. So yeah, I think varying communications would vary on the type of place that you would be at, and the size at well.

Interviewer: What are your expectations when it comes to feedback?

Participant B: I think for me personally, it's kind of at a task by task situation because there are so many different things that we do here. If I'm... I might be doing an email blast, doing a website update, working on a blogger influencer event, doing social media and working under a variety of managers, so for me to have a monthly or a yearly kind of all-encompassing review would be difficult, just because of all the people that you work under and all the things you touch. So I think it's best, for me at least, I like to have kind of that immediate... If I send something over to you and you don't like it or I did it wrong, I want you to say to me right then, "You need to write it this way, you need to say it this way." Or whether it's that or kind of putting in design task for Basecamp or doing a website update, I definitely prefer someone to just pull me in, because that way it's fresh in my mind too. I think it resonates a little bit better the next time you go to do it. Instead of working a certain way for a whole year, and then they're like, "You've been doing this wrong for a while. It's kind of sucking." I would rather them say, "We want... " I think it kind of, in the millennium sense, it makes us more motivated to get better to keep succeeding. So having that instantaneous feedback is just gonna make you be like, "Alright, that's fine. Let me do it again and I'll show you that I can do it better."

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on flex scheduling, and the option to work remotely?

Participant B: I would say, "Yes," I think most Millennials would, we think that we

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should get what we want. But we're so automated now and we use so much technology that a lot of... Almost everything we do is right in that computer. Obviously, it is easier for us to be in the office with each other, let me go run over to the graphics team and see what the status is. So I think it's a balance of knowing, "Okay, if on Friday, or whatever day of the week, I know that I have tasks that I'm gonna be working on and I'm not gonna need to touch base with any of the team members." Or, "If something comes up, I can shoot them a note." I think at that point it's like, "Yeah, you can work from home a day or flex your schedule and work 7:00 to 4:00." As long as those tasks are getting done, I think that's what's most important. Some people will work, they'll be at their job from 9:00 to 5:00, but they might only work a couple of hours of it and then they'll finish the rest at night. It's just the way people's brains work differently and I think that employers are kind of starting to notice that, that brains work differently and that technology is kind of the way that we work, so it's allowing for schedules to be a little more flexed and I think that it works to an extent. I don't think everybody could work remote, but I do think, "I'm working from home today," or, "I'm going and I'm gonna work on site at such and such client's place," like we do for Marriott. I think that that's definitely doable.

Interviewer: How could managers evaluate work performance without counting hours?

Participant B: Yes, I think that the hour counting is a little bit more old-school and I think measuring performance is based on kind of how I was talking about before, reaching those tasks. If tasks are getting done and clients are happy and everything's kind of getting turned in on time and it's a well-oiled machine, I don't really think the structure of

hours matters as much. Obviously, it's important if someone's paying you. They like to see you, they like to know that you're actually putting in a good amount of time in. But like I was saying before, someone can be here from 9:00 to 5:00 and maybe their brain turns off or for whatever reason, they go off in la-la land and look on whatever for an hour. As long as they're getting that task done, I think that that's kind of the most important thing and that's more a measure than, I'm here for eight hours or I spent two and a half hours writing this content. Because sometimes, for that type of stuff, it can take me an hour to write content or it can take me two and a half hours to write content. It all depends on where my brain is at, how much I can find, what's relevant for me to share. It just depends. So that hourly measure makes it difficult, because it's not necessarily consistent for every project, too.

Interviewer: What do you think the key is to successfully managing an integrated communications agency?

Participant B: I don't think so, not work-wise. I think, honestly, the best... Having a project manager, I think is really key. Kind of that key thing. Having a project manager and having those strict processes which we... The Chicago office, which I don't know if you know or not, but they have super amazing processes that are coming this way, and they can flex for someone who goes out of town or if they get a new person. They'd literally slip in and it's like a well-oiled machine. It just keeps on rolling. So I think having that process and then having everyone well-trained on that process versus, "We've

gotta get it done, come on in, do it!" Kind of taking time and doing it right versus doing it just to do it definitely makes for more success. That's all.

Participant C

Interviewer: How long have you worked in the industry?

Participant C: Well I just graduated last week, but I've been interning for about a year and a half.

Interviewer: And what is your current job title or role?

Participant C: Currently, I am a graphic designer.

Interviewer: In your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant C: Oh my goodness.

Interviewer: There are no wrong answers.

Participant C: I guess for me it would be like different forms of communication and different ways to translate your message maybe, visual versus like editorial.

Interviewer: Okay. So with that as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant C: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you think that there might be more room for integration?

Participant C: Yes, I think we can always do better.

Interviewer: Are there any specific obstacles that are standing in the way of integration?

Participant C: I think especially like with social media, we just forget to utilize all aspects of the platform.

Interviewer: Why do you think that happens?

Participant C: I just think you have so many options that you kind of like... Things get put by the way side, you know what I mean? You're just trying to rapidly fire things as quick as you can. I think we're... I think we're aware, but sometimes we just try to put all of our eggs in one basket and then forget like, "Oh, we could have done a little bit of this or that too." And we definitely follow a pattern for stuff. People stick with what they're comfortable with.

Interviewer: How could an issue like that be resolved?

Participant C: I think you're always at the beck and call of the client, and therefore it's kind of hard to break out of that mold 'cause they get so comfortable in there. They're usually the last person to say like, "Hey, let's try something new. So...

Interviewer: Do you think that further training or professional development programs could help benefit this agency or help move it more towards integration?

Participant C: Yeah, probably, I'm sure. There's always room for improvement everywhere.

Interviewer: Are there any kind of specific areas that you think further training would be beneficial?

Participant C: I don't know off-hand, but personally I always feel like writing content is… like I lack that, because I'm so art mind-sided... That's not even a word. But things like I'm constantly thinking about like, "How does this look, how does... " I never look at the actual words. I just see it as a shape. You know what I mean? So I feel personally I should probably take more time or take it upon myself to doing better with that.

Interviewer: So going along with this idea of cross training? Do you think it works both

ways? Should practitioners who don't specialize in design take a course or workshop to understand the basics of graphic design?

Participant C: I think so, because I worked at a different place where your brand person always talked to the client. And then they'd send over all the stuff and basically like vector versus raster, things like that, which is common everyday words for me, is clueless to them. And so I think just understanding the basics of how it operates on both ends, like us understanding each other's jobs would make it a little easier.

Interviewer: Have you ever been put in a situation where, because a brand manager didn't understand the digital design aspects of a project, they promised something you can't deliver? Or they promised something and they didn't get enough information, so you weren't able to move forward?

Participant C: Absolutely, that happens all the time. I feel like... Not here per se, but at other places it has, yeah.

Interviewer: Could cross training eliminate those types of issues?

Participant C: It definitely could have there. But once again, everything is so like, they needed it five minutes ago that you don't really have time. You're just in the moment hurrying through everything.

Interviewer: What obstacles stand in the way of training?

Participant C: I think it's probably both time and there isn't enough money. Time is a big thing. 'Cause personally, there's always things that I want to learn or take upon myself to do, but there's never enough time in the day.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for providing that training? Managers? Employees?

Participant C: I don't know. Maybe a little bit of each. 'Cause I know, specifically, with all the software we use, they're constantly changing it and coming out with new ones. And before I worked with designers who had been in the field for 30 years, and they started, they were not digital. So they've had to take it upon themselves to keep learning, and at the same time, they need it for their job. But their job wasn't allowing them the time to take that and learn from it, so it was a struggle for them. Where it's like, I haven't been in the field long enough where I've seen huge changes yet, but I feel like it's just one of those things that I'm passionate about it anyway, so I'll take it upon myself, hopefully, when that day comes.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be a priority during the hiring process to look for that passion/self-motivation in applicants?

Participant C: I think so, 'cause otherwise, you're gonna have people just sitting back, waiting for someone else to do it for them. That's not how it works. [chuckle]

Interviewer: If you were screening job applicants, is there anything in particular that you think might help signify whether or not someone is a self-motivated learner?

Participant C: At my other job, which was not in the same field, but still you look for the same things in people, whenever you hire. I always looked at trust. How do they speak, if they say they're gonna be here at this time, are they there? Are they early? Are they... Just things like that. Start building a trust relationship is a big thing.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on personality testing? Do you think that that's something small to mid-size agencies should consider?

Participant C: I don't know, because I'm not very... I'm not really up on that. I don't know too much about it. But I feel like, especially in this setting and atmosphere, people come from all walks of life. Especially with the more techie and digitalized career paths people take, a lot of times, they're not outgoing people whatsoever. It's... I don't know. It's hard to say. Is someone going to fail that test, yet they're the best digital coders in the world, or can they write HTML like nobody's business? I don't know. I don't know, that's a really great question.

Interviewer: That's a good point.

Participant C: Yeah.

Interviewer: Different personalities might perform better at different jobs.

Participant C: Yeah, they lend well to different things.

Interviewer: As you said, within an integrated agency there are a lot of different personalities at work. Do you think it's better to have really streamlined processes for management or do you think work flows should be more individualized?

Participant C: I think it would be nice to think of it as being very individualized, like you said, and specific to a person's process, but at the same time, like today, Kevin's out. So I had to do some of his jobs, and the way he organizes files is so different from mine. It took me forever just to figure out, "Where is this app? What is he doing?" Whereas he can just quickly grab it, know where it is, what he's doing. So it'd be nice to have more of a uniform way, I think.

Interviewer: So in a perfect world more customization would be great but it's not realistic?

Participant C: No, and especially if I were to quit today, and somebody had to come in and pick up my job, what's gonna be the easiest way for them to slide right in? I think if

there were just a general, step one, step two, kind of process, it would be easier to understand.

Interviewer: What about looking at communication channels? Do you think channels of communication should be set and consistent as well?

Participant C: I think it's best to try to keep it one form. Even if I just talk somebody about it, or... We all have a meeting. I try to still... I try to still go on base camp and be like, "Reviewed this in meeting, had phone call, this was discussed." That way, if somebody outside of the picture comes in, they see, "Okay, well this was mentioned, this was done outside of here, but it's still being covered." Plus, cover all your bases. That way, you're not ever responsible for something getting dropped, or not taken care of.

Interviewer: When it comes to feedback - what expectations do you have?

Participant C: I'm constantly... I'm confident in my work, but at the same time, I'm constantly looking for someone to verify and agree with that. Like "Yes, this good." "Yes, this is on track." Or just things like that. I don't need a sticker every time I turn my library book in at kindergarten. But same kind of concept, as you're going through it, just like, "Hey, that's right, keep it up" or something. That way, you know you're doing good, you're not worrying the whole time.

Interviewer: Do you think annual performance reviews are best-practice in a small to mid-sized agency? Or should managers move away from those all together?

Participant C: I don't... I feel like the more corporate-y you get, it's probably necessary to have documented things of that as well. Whereas, I don't know... I just feel like at a small agency, it's very just tight-knit little conversations all day long about it, so maybe move away from those.

Interviewer: What do you think of flex scheduling or the option of working remotely? \

Participant C: I know here we have a couple people who do that. And I've even done it a couple days, work from home. But there is kind of that lapse in communication. I feel like people in office forget like, "Oh, we can call her and have her do this." You know what I mean? I get sidetracked doing something else, and they're on a whole different task, so there's a little bit of a lapse. But I think it can be done effectively, if set up for that. It needs to be structured. But I think so, 'cause honestly, everything I do is on a computer. I email the person sitting 10 feet from me to review something, so... Which is kind of sad. I could walk over there. But the point is, almost everything's digital we work on. So I feel like yes, it could be done remotely.

Participant D

Interviewer: Okay, so first just background information, how long have you been

working in the industry?

Participant D: I have been in the industry since 2012 when I graduated. So it's 2016, so

four years. Is that fours years? Oh my God.

[laughter]

Interviewer: Sounds about right. Okay and what is your current job title or role?

Participant D: I am a client success manager.

Interviewer: Okay, and in your own words how would you define integrated

communications?

Participant D: I would define it as a blend between traditional marketing and digital

marketing.

Interviewer: So, using that as a working definition, do you think that this agency is

integrated?

Participant D: Yes, I think this agency is definitely integrated, I think because we're mid-

sized, it's maybe not as integrated at the capacity that some of the larger ones are. But I

definitely see a lot of crossover in all of my accounts and in all of the new business we sell it includes traditional marketing and digital.

Interviewer: So you think there is room to become more integrated?

Participant D: Yes.

Interviewer: What obstacles, if any, do you think stand in the way of integration?

Participant D: I think the size of the agency and not always having the right budgets available. I think budgets. I think you can't always do a fully, crazy digital experience if you're working with just a $500 out-of-pocket spend. But with our agency merger, I find that all of the clients coming on my plate have like high ad spend dollar so it makes it, there's more...

Interviewer: Moving towards integration?

Participant D: Moving towards integration, yeah.

Interviewer: So do you think there's anything specifically that contributes to the integration or that might make it easier for your agency to be integrated?

Participant D: I think the layout of the office will help. I think moving how Dan moved

everyone. The day when you started when things were kind of chunky - there were a lot of gaps versus like getting all the people that collaborate the most in one central location and kind of leaving that other side for maybe more like developers or people that wouldn't have an immediate crossover.

Interviewer: What role does training play in integration?

Participant D: I think training is really important.

Interviewer: Do you think that there are any specific areas of training that you would like to see more of at your agency - for yourself or just in general?

Participant D: I would like to get the Ad Words certified - they offer that. And I think with just my workload right now I haven't had a chance to do it. And I want to get a deeper dive in to social media because I feel like I have a good grasp of it, but our new co-workers in Chicago, they could tell you everything in the world there is to know and I think there are things that we don't even know that can be done that we could be doing, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: So, specifically are there any challenges that you face that you think could be overcome with training? Further training.

Participant D: Yeah, I think just, when I... So since I'm the point person for a lot of the

clients, going back in, I can speak to the reports. But I think knowing and having a deeper understanding of the behind the scenes, I could make better recommendations and not have to lean on the digital team.

Interviewer: So would you say your interest in training is more in furthering as a brand manager/client success or do you think you might be interested in cross-training?

Participant D: Yeah, I think the crossover training would be great.

Interviewer: Okay. And then just talking about the different ways to receive training, do you have any preferences on the type of training? Do you think there's any training that would work better with your schedule or with what you need?

Participant D: I think conferences and workshops. I'm a visual learner and I need someone that's engaging enough. Or like conferences, there's always in having subject matter experts available to speak to that.

Interviewer: So what do you think is most important to you? In regards to training, is it that it's accessibility? Cost? Timing?

Participant D: I think accessible is the biggest one and finding the right type of training and not just like picking one to pick it. Making sure if it's a social media conference you're going to, like the social media conference of the US.

Interviewer: Do you think that there are any areas of training that other people employees could benefit from?

Participant D: I think that we... I think just getting more subject matter experts in here instead of having lots of people that are versed across the board because they don't always have time to sharpen their craft, especially on the digital side. It's ever evolving and they might not always know that you can do this instead of this or this update was made, so now we can do this.

Interviewer: So maybe trying to have people that you could call more experts in specific areas?

Participant D: Mm-hmm. Like having a key SEO/SEM which I think is the direction we're moving.

Interviewer: So as far as training goes, where do you think that responsibility should lie? In a small to mid-size agency, do you think it should be on the managers, the owners to provide that training for employees? Or do you think it should be more on the employees to be self-motivated and seek out additional training on their own?

Participant D: I think it's both. I think it depends on direction that the owner... Cause we have a new owner, everything's so fresh, wants to take and I think it also should be self-

motivating by the individuals. Like if I want to be a subject matter in SEO/SEM then I need to vocalize it and they've made it very apparent that they will pay for that and provide it.

Interviewer: You have experience in recruiting interns, right?

Participant D: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: And you screen interns?

Participant D: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: So is there anything specific that you look for in an intern that makes you think they will have a desire for continued learning? Are there any signs that they will be motivated to seek out and continue growing through their career?

Participant D: Yeah. I think you can tell a lot based off of their attitude when they come in. It's easy to get a sense that someone's eager to learn and how they present themselves and the examples they provide. So that's the biggest thing that I look for.

Interviewer: What do you think about psychological testing or personality testing? Do you think that's something small to mid-size agencies should consider?

Participant D: I do. I think there are modified ones that maybe we should start looking into. I don't think it would hurt. Just sometimes I feel like with those tests though, maybe because I've only taken a handful and I don't always feel like they're reflective, but it obviously works for these bigger companies that have had a lot of success though. Maybe that's something we should definitely explore.

Interviewer: So when it comes recruitment versus training - do you think that there's one bucket that should be focused on?

Participant D: I think the training to make them the best.

Interviewer: Okay. And so going along with that, what do you think the biggest obstacle to training is right now?

Participant D: I think it's in the transition right now. I think it's just been such from like November to right this point, the entire shift. And there's so many things internally that are flipping. And our computers are gonna be changing, we'll all be on Macs. It's just like everything from that little detail to the way that we build, to the way that we project our money. So I think once we come in, we can run a little more smoothly like the Chicago team.

Interviewer: Okay. So you talked about switching to Macs and computer changes, do you think that there might be a limit to how much new technology can be introduced to an

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agency at one time?

Participant D: Yes, I think we... So a prime example is the Chicago team works on Google email and we all integrated. We all have it. We're on there now, but I think a majority of our staff is so accustomed to Outlook and the way Outlook flowed, and I think you've even experienced it. Like it's just... Which is ironic because a lot of people I've talked to, after you train yourself on Google, it's a far more advanced and better performing system. I think it just takes time to get used to 'cause you can color code and put certain emails in the right buckets versus we were so used to one way, so we had one of our developers reroute all of our Google emails into Outlook. So I'm still operating in Outlook.

Interviewer: So with something like this new email server being introduced to the office, do you think there's a better way to go about training employees?

Participant D:: Yeah. We did a video which I watched and a lot of people watched, which was helpful. The Chicago team put it together, but I think even then, it's still... You're struggling to... Like watching the video, and then you have to go back and reference the video, and so I think that's why a lot of people were like, "I just want my Outlook back."

Interviewer: Do you think maybe there's a better way that specific technology or technology in general could be introduced?

Participant D: I think having a formal sit-down. Like something is guiding through, we're all doing it together, and I don't know if maybe for me like watching a video, I think I'm too ADD to... I just would... My mind's already going 50 miles an hour.

Interviewer: So when it comes to stuff like that, there are most likely different needs in the office. Would you say managers should try to individualize skill training and technology training?

Participant D: I think they have to do that to an extent, but at the same time, you can't... It's not a waste of time because it's something they need to know, but I think maybe it's more of a grouping. Maybe it's more like everyone vote how we're gonna learn it. Or people who need to learn it this way, you have this meeting on this day, and everyone else, you don't have to sit in, but you have to teach it to yourself. So I think you have to be flexible to your staff members. But at the same time, yeah, you don't always have the capacity to be like, "I'm gonna do this for you and this for you and this for you and this for you."

Interviewer: When it comes to communication and task delegating, do you think there should be set systems? Or do you think it's more important to just be flexible and going off-the-cuff?

Participant D: I think right now we have to be flexible, but I think the ultimate goal is to have a very set process because that's where the internal balls are getting dropped.

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Interviewer: So in an ideal world, it...

Participant D: It would be like you entered in through here, you give feedback in through here, you respond through here, you meet this way, you do this that way. But I can tell you from the three agencies I've worked at, none have perfected that process yet.

Participant E

Interviewer: How long have you been working in the industry?

Participant E: Almost 20 years.

Interviewer: And what is your current job or role?

Participant E: Role here is Vice President of Marketing and I flex to technology.

Interviewer: Okay and in your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant E: Integrated communication is a comprehensive strategy that crosses all channels, whether it's traditional television radio, or new media, digital advertising, social, email.

Interviewer: And using that kind of as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant E: Yes. We're stronger in some areas than others but for the most part, our value proposition to clients is that we're an integrated agency.

Interviewer: Do you think that there's room to become more integrated?

Participant E: Yes. Absolutely.

Interviewer: If so, are there any specific areas you think that could become more integrated?

Participant E: Definitely. I think traditionally we have had a little bit of a wall between kind of new media and traditional media, so some of it is... A lot of it has to do with recruiting. So in the past, we were very PR-focused, that's... The owner grew up in PR, and so there was heavy emphasis naturally on PR but in my role as working with web, SEO/SEM, digital advertising, social email, all that, what we're having to do is cross-train people and hire people that have a more balanced skill-set.

Interviewer: What contributes to successful integration?

Participant E: We can provide integrated service to one client; it's just a lot of people

involved. So the more I work cross training people to work, to where we have like one leader on an account that has a solid understanding of all the different channels. I think that's the opportunity for integration. But I think every agency is struggling with that because you can't... It's hard to find somebody that understands all areas. Naturally everybody... Students coming out of school today, they've always focused on at least one particular area, or they like a particular area or they're just better at a particular area. So this is a new age of marketing is to get people that can really speak to all of it, and they don't have to be a specialist in all areas. You can tap into teams within the agency that specialize. For example, web. If a brand manager can at least speak to it, at a very high level and have a good understanding of it they can always tap into a specialized team, if necessary. So I think that's what I mean by integration, is just... cross training people so they can speak to everything.

Interviewer: Is there anything specific that you think your agency does well that contributes to integration?

Participant E: Yeah, I think we're just figuring that out and I think there's a big focus on the recruiting a certain type of person, whereas in the past we didn't... In the past, we were recruiting in a very traditional manner. So do they have the skill-set, are they diligent, are they organized, are they gonna fit in culturally? But now I think we're intentionally looking for people that cross boundaries a little bit. The senior people tend to do that more just because they've been around for a while and they've had different rules. But it's the kind of students coming out of school that we are just looking at

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differently how we... And Dan's been a big factor in that, kind of moving that forward. I think that's our focus and where we are doing better, is in the recruiting.

Interviewer: What role does training play in managing integrated communications?

Participant E: Absolutely, yeah. I think the challenge in our small agency is the time to train 'cause we're a small shop and we have client work we have to do, so it's up to the senior staff to kind of set up lunch and learns, but the... It goes back to the recruiting because if a person ticks in a certain way they're gonna naturally be hungry to learn more. And so, there are a lot things out there that an employee can find on their own to keep their skills relevant. So there's free webinars that are often... Happen at lunch time, that you can sign up for, like HubSpot or BuzzFeed. There's email marketing and there's all kinds of webinars. We offer support if people wanna go take a class. There's a lot of industry associations around town that are always having speakers and learning sessions, like Social Media Club of St Louis just met last week. We have the UMSL Digital Conference coming up at Union Station where there's all kinds of speakers and we're paying for some of our staff to go there. I think there's only a certain amount training that an employer can provide and I think we do that, but if you recruit the right people, they're gonna take that way anyway, and just naturally be hungry to learn. And there's a lot of resources out there to always learn more.

Interviewer: What areas of training, do you think mid-sized agencies should focus on?

Participant E: Well maybe... Maybe because I'm VP of technology my answer is a little bit skewed, but I would say technology, because it changes so fast. You can learn PR in school and it stays the same. There's new campaign concept ideas, but it fundamentally remains the same. Social media, Facebook changes their algorithm every day, Google changes algorithms every day, YouTube... There's always new... There's Snapchat's new, there's... I just think in the technology side of things, you can never stop expanding your skills or you'll quickly be outdated.

Interviewer: Talking about technology specifically – do you think there's a best way for new technologies to be introduced to the office?

Participant E: Yeah. I think that was a... [chuckle] It's a good question, because that's a really challenging time in that the company is changing and now, all of a sudden we have new email, new calendar, we almost had a new project management system all at the same time and... Transition is just hard, and I think in that case, I would love to say yes, there's a limit on people but the reality is, is that we move from one company to another. And so it kinda goes to speaking when somebody is very hungry to learn, and when they're open and keep up on technology, it's not as much pressure. The people that have the harder time with it were the more senior people. One person in particular really wanted someone to sit down and have a training session. Whereas, I think the younger people that are used to technology changing were just like, "Oh, okay. So now I just click on this to get to the same thing." And so, it speaks to keeping your skills updated, 'cause people that grow, it's not as much of a stress point.

Interviewer: Should training (technology and skill) be individualized to best meet the needs of each employee?

Participant E: In a perfect world, I think yeah, the options would be great. But in a 15-person office, it's not realistic. So if we were a multinational company that had dedicated people to training, great. But there's not... No one owns training here, and I would say that's the case in all offices our size. I think it would be rare if you found someone dedicated to that. In some of the international companies I've worked with, that lived within a jar. There would be like a trainer. There was a train the trainer [chuckle] in the large companies. So there were people training trainers you know. But that's... We don't have those kind of resources here in a smaller agency. I think we try to make it as easy as possible but... And that's not the norm. Changing technology like that is really not the norm. It's because we became 10-X, that we had to do that. I think email is pretty much settled. I think calendars, some people struggle a little bit with it. Now, our project manager that's coming in, her role will be to really look at the project management system. And we may stay on Basecamp, we may move. There's Scrum systems, there's burn-down charges, all kinds of great project management. But we have to be careful not to be over-processed. So, we wanna use technology to help, but we don't wanna over-process ourselves unnecessarily either. So, it's a fine line. So she we will own that, because project management is critical to our business. People learning, getting used to a new email system or a calendar. There'll be glitches it'll happen over time. It's almost like managing your own personal checkbook at a small company. Is that something that we

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are gonna invest in, is a trainer or all of these sessions and get the entire company in a room. If we need it, we would probably do it. But the reality is, there was only a couple people that ultimately struggled with it and we'll help them the best we can.

Interviewer: What is the biggest obstacle mid-sized agencies face when they are trying to implement training programs?

Participant E: Cost and time... I think, just because of the nature of the business being so fast-paced that employers want people coming in ready to hit the ground running. And there's just not a lot of time and money for hand-holding. We will to some extent, but the reality is... If someone just can't keep up, then they're possibly not a good fit for the company because there's plenty of people out there that can roll with the punches, and learn new technologies, that are happy and hungry. There's plenty of people that tick that way. It's a cultural thing. If somebody wants that much hand-holding or needs that much hand-holding, in terms of training, I would not recommend they work for a small company. It's not the place for it. It is time and money.

Interviewer: If you, as someone who manages integrated communications, were to introduce a development program or training program, what form/s would it take?

Participant E: I would say maybe a combination. In my career, I've used a combination. So the UMSL Digital Conference is coming up at Union Station and that's a really good opportunity to hear some speakers. But hearing it is different than doing it. So I would

say maybe a combination of that. Conferences provide opportunities to hear some speakers, but hearing it is different than doing it. So I think you need to hear it at the conference, but then use webinars to start getting a little bit closer into how I actually use that in my day-to-day job. Ultimately, if you hear these new ideas at conferences and then webinars get you a little bit closer at your desk, on your headphones, to how do I use this. But ultimately, you have to have a work environment that allows people to try new things and do new things. While small companies maybe don't have dedicated trainers or may have the time and the resources to do that, what we do have is flexibility to try just about anything. If somebody kinda comes to the table and says, "Oh, I saw this great new email concept." We email it out to the company. I just did this the other day. I saw a really super-cool campaign concept on Facebook that linked into a website that would help SEO and get good visibility. And I just emailed it out and everybody was like, "Oh awesome!" So the next client we have, let's try that. While small companies may not have the time and the resources, what we do have is flexibility to try just about anything. We can share ideas and try it and test it. We at least have a platform to allow people to try new things.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for implementing training programs?

Participant E: I think everyone has to be accountable. Everyone. HR, obviously, they're accountable for happy, healthy, employees. Executive managers, such as myself, I'm responsible to continuously up the game in terms of the offerings that we provide, which means that people will have to deliver on that. I think employees have to be accountable

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to continuously grow. And I think ultimately, the owner of the company is accountable to have an environment to foster that. I think everybody has to be accountable. And that goes back to a cultural thing. If you hire the right people, you're gonna have that culture where we can all grow together.

Interviewer: Do you have anything specifically you look for when you're screening applicants that you think shows whether or not they are someone who will be self-motivated and eager to learn?

Participant E: Yep. So Dan and I even talked about this. It's almost like we would rather have... You don't want an A plus introvert. I would rather have a B extrovert than an A plus introvert. You can't win in marketing as an introvert, you just can't. I think in my field it's more common in digital, because coders just... They're a different personality. But for the most part, they still even need to be... Maybe while they're not extroverted enough to be client facing, they at least need to be extroverted enough to interact with the employees and bring new ideas to the table and be willing to try new things. Definitely I look for a little bit of being extroverted in the interviews too. In my field, in digital, I can usually ask technical questions to see how people would handle a certain situation which kind of clues me in to the type of person they are. Again, it's a little harder in a small agency. Some of the bigger firms that I've worked for have very extensive screening processes. Like Build a Bear Workshop, I probably went through maybe six rounds of interviews with different people within the organization. I met with the CIO, the CMO, the CEO. I was at a higher level position, but I met with the CFO. I met with all the C

level officers and ultimately at the end of the day, if they all agree I might be a fit, then I went for a full day psychological testing. So, it was like six hours I was locked in a glass room taking these computer tests. And at one point I really thought like, "Is there cameras here... Are they testing me to see how long I'm gonna do this?" But they paid... I think they paid $3,500 for the test, and so the only people they send there are people that have made it through all of these different rounds. And the questions were really odd, I couldn't see how this was helping them make a decision, but they shared with me my results afterward... After I was hired and it was spot on. I mean spot on. And so, they have certain personality traits that they're looking for. And they're retail, so a lot of it is honesty and integrity, because there's people that are in the stores touching money, but then they're also looking for... I don't know if I could articulate it, but it's like somebody who's just happy, and outgoing, and smart, and willing to learn and all of the things we've been kind of talking about. There's... There are ways to test for that. We've talked about it here, like could we afford to do that, maybe at least for the higher level people. But again, it's time and resources. So we kind of have to have our gut feeling of who do they know... And St. Louis is small, everybody knows everybody. So, usually you can find somebody that knows.

Interviewer: So do you think personality testing, when it comes to hiring, is something agencies should consider?

Participant E: If there was a way to make it cost-effective, I think it would be a great idea, but obviously... Again, at the size of our agency we can't spend $3,500 on everybody...

And also marketing agencies are kind of a revolving door these days. Gone are the days when people would have a job for 15-20 years. People move three to five years, developers move every two years, so if there was a cost-effective way to do something like that, I think it would be worth considering.

Interviewer: How does high turnover rate affect the training employees receive?

Participant E: It's probably a little bit of a double-edged sword. It's just like in marketing what you're learning with SEO/SEM, it's all about return on investment. So, companies will invest in higher level people that they know that they're gonna stay longer. I think too it depends on the personality of the organization and I think with the 10X personality you will see... We've already invested in Alexis and Emily going up to Chicago. And I think to some extent there is... You have to help get people excited and you have to kind of foster that environment. But again, if someone doesn't tick that way, it doesn't matter what you do for them, they're not gonna train, they're not gonna learn, they're not gonna...

Interviewer: Would you recommend agencies focus on recruitment or training? If you had to pick one.

Participant E: I would say recruiting, because there are informal ways to train on the job. You've sat with me and it's nothing formal, but a little bit over time you see something, you understand something, you watch, you learn. It's a little bit of on the job training, a little bit of informal training with a senior person. I think you can cover that, but you can't

fundamentally change who someone is. They've gotta want it. This is like a sport, marketing is like a sport. You wanna play the game. If you're here just to win, there's no end to the game. So if you're just here because "I want a higher salary" or "I just want an easy nine to five," this is not the field. You definitely don't wanna be in an agency and you probably don't even want to be in marketing if that's the kind of person that you are. You might of chose the wrong career. So I think recruiting is critical. If you get the right people, you could do anything with them once they're here.

Interviewer: As someone in a management role, do you think agencies should implement clear, set processes? Or should workflows be more individualized to meet the needs of each employee?

Participant E: I grew up as a project manager, so again, I'm skewed in my thinking, but I think that the process needs to be the same. And that's actually been one of my gripes here for two years, is that... Again, as long as you're not over-processed and causing unnecessary work on people. There has to be a core... And I have documents that I've created and I've shared out and said, "This is how you enter tasks in the system and this is why." And I tell people why, because you have to put how much time they have for that task. Because I have to be able to look at Kevin's work day, and know at a glance, "He's good, he can handle this." Or, "There's no way he's gonna get this done." Somebody sold this project. And in order to price out the project, they figured out about how many labor hours it's gonna take people to do that. When it comes time to executing the task, you have to tell the person delivering, "I've estimated this is gonna take you five hours to do."

And that's how we stay on budget and on track. And it also allows us to manage people's kind of capacity. There's some fundamental things like that and it gets really tricky with large scale technology projects. You can't put a task in, that's a 40 hour task. How do you define a project and how do you define a task? If it's over X number of hours, or it takes more than one person like 40 hours, even if it's just the developer, you gotta break that down. Because how much can they do in a day? How much can they do in a week? And then that's where you get in kinda the burn down. Because then you need to know how close are they to being finished? If you Google scrum charts and that, I would love to see that happen here. But I don't know that we'll ever have those kind of technology projects. But the challenge we have here, why people can't follow that, it's not because we're an integrated agency, it's because we have so many part-timers. We have a lot of contractors. Karen is a contractor. Heather, she might have a Vice President title, she's a contractor. They're only here part-time. They kind of blow in, they have their accounts, and then they blow out. They're not really laddering up to kind of this bigger company [26:23] ____. It's almost like the most formalized freelance network I've ever seen. It works financially, but it is a challenge for the operations people, because everyone works in a different fashion. I've been trying to have... We've gotten better. We have gotten a lot better, but there's a lot of room to grow. That's why, there wasn't even a project manager here when I started. I think I told you this story. I hired them out of my budget and they were kind of focused on my projects, design, technology. But now, Dan is a big supporter of that, so Molly is coming in in a couple of weeks and she is gonna be like an elevated project manager across boundaries. She's gonna have a big responsibility to kind of help pull all this together. I think that's the trick, is we have to have that core process. It just can't be

over-processed. And everybody needs to follow it, understand why we're doing it. There's reasons. We're not just telling you to follow a process just to follow a process. It truly helps. It's like the cogwheels. Everything has to fit together. I think if presented in the right fashion, and if it's a simple enough process that everybody can just jump on board with it. And it takes time. We've had so many changes here too. People don't realize there is kind of that underlying process that has been along the way. Because they think, "Well okay, now it's Craig, now it's Dan, now it's our project manager's not here." Some people think the process is changing, but it really hasn't. It's just, we need someone to enforce it every day. I think Molly will be great at that.

Interviewer: Does the same apply when it comes to channels of communication?

Participant E: We're a fast paced organization. We need to be able to just walk over to somebody's desk, or pick up the phone, or send an email, or slap somebody or whatever. As long as that core conversation is documented in base camp. Because if I get hit by a bus tomorrow, somebody needs to be able to sit down at my desk and pick up where I left off and service those clients. There's gonna be some... There is legacy knowledge, no matter how you slice and dice it. There's always gonna be legacy knowledge, so introducing someone new to a client can be a little challenging and you have to be sensitive to that. But if the core projects are in base camp, and some of the core conversations and edits and whatnot are there. But that's where it's a fine line between over-processing because if it takes you more time to enter an edit into base camp versus just doing it, then you just have to draw the line. You need the core stuff in base camp,

but not every little detail needs to be. It's okay to like one off somebody on email or slack, or "Hey Kevin, add this and send me the file." To some extent you have to allow that. We're humans, we're people, we've... We're a people organization, we service in that way, so you can't... You can't be robotic, it will ultimately slow things down. If you were to force everybody to put everything in base camp, it would slow everything down. So within reason, right?

Interviewer: What is your opinion when it comes to flex schedules and the remote work option?

Participant E: Yeah. I think it's fine, I've worked on flex schedules before. I think it's a nice perk. Again, it comes down to the person. Are they diligent enough? Are they organized enough? Are they truly gonna be working or at least available to clients? I think it's a bit of an honor system. If people start to abuse, then it causes problems. And everywhere I've worked, there's always been those people that abuse it, that kind of ruin it for everybody else. Build-A-Bear, they have what they call a consolidated work week, CWW, so you work an extra hour every day and then you have every other Friday off. But you're off, you're not expected... You have to be available. If there's a crisis that happens, you have to be available, but you're off. So working remotely is fine... I actually get a lot more done remotely than being in the office because I have my to-do list and I can focus on my to-do list at home, whereas I'm here, people need something and there's always something happening. But I think at an executive level, that's expected. I don't think... If you had an executive team that worked remotely all the time, it would be chaos.

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There has to be people here driving the ship, right? [chuckle] I think coming in later...

This week is spring break so I've been coming in later, but I've also been leaving at 6:00, 6:30. I'm coming in 9:00, 9:30, and I'm leaving at 6:00, 6:30, but most days I like to get here at 8:00, 8:30, and some days I still leave at 6:00, 6:30. I think marketing in an agency is just... There's gonna be peaks and troughs, and people have to be willing to put in the extra hours when needed, and then vice versa. If we're on a low period, then I think we should be flexible to, "Go take a long lunch or take... " We do summer work hours here, you haven't been here long enough, but in the summer, everybody can leave at 3:00 on Friday as long as their work is done. They do have to put in the extra hours during the week so it's not like we just say, "Okay, you have two hours free every Friday through the summer," but I think that's... I think that's expected in today's world. It helps people have a better work/life balance because Americans really don't have that much vacation to begin with, but you just have to make sure that the client work is being done and there's nobody abusing it.

Interviewer: How should managers dispense feedback? Should agencies move away from the annual peer review?

Participant E: I think, again, in an ideal world, it would be nice to sit and have what we call post-mortems after projects, and sometimes we do. It's usually if a project has gone wrong, we kinda get the team together and we'll talk about, "What happened? Was it the client? Was it scoped wrong? Was... Did something earlier in the process go wrong that caused this whole ripple effect?" We do have post-mortems occasionally. I meet with my

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team as needed, I used to meet with them every single week and I could tell... I could

sense their frustration of, "Ugh," so now it's sort of just like as needed; if something

comes up, if we need to talk about something. We do annual performance reviews and

they evaluate themselves, I evaluate them, we talk about it, we come to an agreement on

what the score is. I'm a very big proponent of setting clear goals, and that is hard in the

agency world because everything changes so much, but you don't know what client is

gonna hit your desk or... So how do I quantify what you do? I would love to say if you're

a SEO/SEM manager, that that vertical grows by 10% in a year, but if you're not involved

in the sales process, then you may not be able to do that, right? So it's hard to find

quantifiable goals in a small marketing agency, but I think we've managed to do it, to

some extent. At Build A Bear, it was a very rigorous review process. So I had to meet

with the CMO every... Once a month. I had to put it on... I had to put it on her calendar,

which was packed. So finding time was already a difficult thing. I had to give her an

agenda 24 hours in advance that she had to approve. And I had to come to that meeting

with that agenda, and whatever points were on that agenda, I'd have documentation... I

mean, crazy prepared because you never knew what questions she was gonna rip at you

about, "What's the campaign here?" or "How much are we spending there?" or "Who's

involved in it?" You had to have all the supporting documentation and answers ready. We

did that like once a month, and then for the review, we had corporate goals that... There

were two sections. There was a corporate goal, a department goal, and an individual goal.

The corporate goals were the whole company was gonna increase revenue by 30% doing

this, that, and the other thing. Everybody had to do something to ladder up to the

corporate goal. Then depending on what department you were in, that department had

goals as well, and then you had to set your own goals. So it was a very regressed review process. Again, larger organization moves slower, has a lot more money to do things like that, has HR people designated to managing all that process. But I think we're trying to implement that a little bit here as much as it makes sense. Again, we don't wanna over-process people.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Participant E: Yeah, I would just say the only other thing from an HR standpoint is we try to get people perks as we see that, as we a need for it. One of our employees was... It wasn't Lindsay, it was someone that you don't know, but she was pregnant. She was kind of putting in a lot of hours 'cause she was trying to get prepared for maternity leave and we were a little bit short-staffed at that time. We gave her a Time For Dinner gift card, which is where you go and make all these meals and store 'em up in your freezer. Or we had someone that had had a surgery and was out for a while and we sent a maid service to the house. We try to find things just to motivate people. We'll try to do company events. We're gonna go to Fairmont Park, or we're gonna have on April 11th our little potluck, Cardinal's opening day, and we try to do things like that as much as possible to keep people motivated. But again, it comes down to the people within the organization. The executive team can't create a culture. You can't do a top-down culture. The employees have to surface that. Actually, I don't know if you'll see any of it, but the HR person that used to work for Dan at his last agency has spun off her own company, and that's all she does is company culture. She works with Southwest Airlines and larger organizations.

But she's doing a project for 10-X. It's like a culture-building project. Right now, we're super-small, but as we're bringing in these new people and selecting, recruiting them carefully, and then have this sort of cultural implementation project that she's launching, I think it's gonna be a really big turning point for the organization. I really do. It's one of the things I think we've suffered with is culture, because people... Because there's turnover... Because it's so fast-paced... Because we have all these part-timers... Because we're a small agency where we don't we don't have formal training... Because of all the things you asked, I think it's been a tough road. But we're not the only one's facing this. It's a great thesis topic that you have, I think. I'm super-excited to read it.

Participant F

Interviewer: How long have you been working in the industry?

Participant F: Well, I've been in the agency world for about 10 years but about 20 total in marketing.

Interviewer: Okay, and what is your current job title or role?

Participant F: VP of Strategy.

Interviewer: And in your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant F: I think it's the use of or it's a multi-channel approach to marketing. So it's working with a variety of different marketing channels in concert with one another to achieve a client's communications and marketing goals.

Interviewer: Using that as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant F: Yes, definitely.

Interviewer: Do you think that there's room for more integration?

Participant F: I think there is definitely room for more. I think it's not as much a function of our agency not providing those services or the solutions to clients, it's more that sometimes we have clients who come in with a more narrow focus or request only kind of a single channel approach. For example, they might come in and say, "I just wanna hire you for the building of a website or I just wanna hire you for a PR program." When we know that a more integrated approach could be more effective for them, but whether it's just their perspective or their budget or maybe they are already engaged with another company or somebody internally doing other pieces of it, sometimes their perspective is limited to a less integrated approach.

Interviewer: What obstacles stand in the way of integration?

Participant F: I think that one obstacle is sometimes the size of clients that we either target or that we attract. I think we tried to target larger clients who have a broader perspective and maybe bigger budgets, but I think sometimes we attract smaller clients and their budgets, or for other reasons they might only have a more limited perspective or only hire us for limited services. So I think that's one limitation. I think internally the limitation is probably our size. While we have staff members who are proficient in a variety of areas, we don't have a lot of depth in several of those areas. So I think our size can sometimes be a challenge to providing a full repertoire of integrated marketing communications.

Interviewer: Is there anything that really contributes to the integration at your agency?

Participant F: I think the diversity of our backgrounds helps a lot, so I think we have... Within our staff, we have a pretty wide swath of backgrounds and professional experience, so I think that's a bonus. That's a positive thing that we offer. So we have some people who come with really strong digital background and other people who have spent years in PR and other people who maybe excelled in copyrighting and advertising. So I do think we have a wide range of talents that are here in our pool, and I think that helps us to provide a more integrated solution for our clients, and I even think some small things like the environment that we work in is very open. While it can be distracting and noisy at times, I do think it does contribute to that integrated approach just by sharing of

ideas and overhearing people working on something and then kind of piping in and offering to help. Just being aware of what others are working on I think is a positive thing.

Interviewer: What role does training play in managing an integrated communications agency?

Participant F: Well, I believe in training in general. I think it'd be hard for us to make the argument against training but at the same time reality would probably indicate that a smaller firm is gonna have a challenge with providing some of that training and mentorship just because we don't have as much depth within certain capacity to have a robust training program. So doesn't mean we shouldn't do it and shouldn't be committed to training because I think that's how people individually develop and how we cross-pollinate ideas and share our own expertise, but I think it can be challenging when you're a smaller firm to provide a structured training program. So, yeah, does that answer the question?

[chuckle]

Interviewer: What are the biggest obstacles that stand in the way of training?

Participant F: I think if you're gonna get current employees to be excited about and to be

effective trainers, you have to as an agency demonstrate your commitment in that area. And one way that you have to demonstrate your commitment is say, "Hey, so and so, I want you to dedicate X amount of your time to training and mentoring our new or junior employees." If that same person's being pulled in a variety of directions, they're being told that they have to do X amount of hours in client work, you can see that that would become at odds with that commitment to training. So I think from the top-down, there has to be a kind of a support for that and endorsement of someone's time because as an agency that bills our time and tracks our time, I think the natural push is to dedicate as much of your time in a week towards billable account work. That wouldn't be training, right? So somebody or some multitude of people have to have the kind of blessing from above to dedicate a certain amount of time to training for it to be effective, I think.

Interviewer: What areas of training, specifically, could small to mid-sized agencies benefit from?

Participant F: I think maybe technical training. I'll come back to that. Maybe reporting, kind of communications like results reporting. I think some things honestly you either have or you don't like they're hard to train. I think it's hard to train creativity. I think it's hard to teach someone to be creative. I think it's hard to train at this level, writing skills. I think somebody should have come in the door with strong writing skills if that's part of their job description. We're not English teachers. I think for us to go back and sort of try to turn somebody into a great writer and is a tall order. So some of those things like those are just two examples I think. People either should have them when they walk in the door

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or they don't, but then I think there's things more of I would say a technical nature that would be valuable in our field to be trained upon. So perhaps things more on the SEO, SEM field, social media, even some content. Kind of about content development as much as like content distribution. I think we can be better training our people, in other words, writing content, creative and cool and engaging content. It's something that you can have in your DNA, hopefully. But okay, what to do with that? Like how can we distribute that more effectively? It's something I think we're able to train people on. And then the second one I mentioned the kind of client communications or results reporting. I think if we could better standardize that and kind of train our team to be consistent in that, I think that that's really valued by our clients. How do we market back to them our own work? How do we show them the value of what they're paying for in a concise and clear format? So they say, "Well, how do you know? That program really, really was effective. Or look what Ten-X was able to do for my business." And I think we're just okay at that, and I think we could be better at refining those tools and then training our entire team to use them consistently and effectively.

Interviewer: And where do you think the responsibility for training should fall? Who should be responsible for providing that training? Employees? Managers?

Participant F: I think it's honestly both probably. That sounds a little bit idealistic maybe, but I think definitely the first side of that is having managers provide that sort of mentorship and training. But I think that the individuals have to be receptive too and motivated to grow their own kind of knowledge. So without both, I think it's a problem

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So if it was only a top-down and kind of, "Okay. I'm gonna schedule this with you and you have to meet with me X amount of time. And this is what we're gonna do." Then if the person isn't personally motivated or receptive to it, I think it's gonna only go so far. And we've had those situations where I kind of try to train someone and they're just sort of moderately interested. On the flipside, if it's just self-motivated and I'm out there digging for resources and watching tutorials and going to seminars, that's awesome to see that in somebody, but I think they still probably need and want a little bit more kind of personal hands on in office mentorship and training.

Interviewer: When screening applicants, is there anything that you think employer should look for that specifically signals this person will be receptive to training?

Participant F: Yeah. I think it's tough. I think we've traditionally struggled a bit with those screening tools. I don't know that we're the most regimented in our use of certain kind of evaluation tools in our hiring process. It's always been a little bit more of fly by night or kind of gut feeling driven. And I don't know that that's always been effective. I do think one sign of somebody who is that type of person is how much they've challenged themselves to go potentially outside of kind of a normal track. So is there evidence in their personal or professional history that shows that they had sought out unique learning experiences or have supplemented a more traditional path with internships or like shadowing opportunities? It's just that I think maybe that those could be indicators of somebody who would be receptive to growing and training. I guess those would be one

thing you could look for, but I don't know. I don't know whether that stick kind of using structured screening tools.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on personality tests when it comes to hiring and recruitment? Is that something agencies should consider?

Participant F: To my knowledge, we have not. And I've been here a long time. We talked about it at various times in our history. A lot of times, unfortunately, some of those are cost prohibitive. I know there's a great local company that specializes in developing those screening tools for companies, but when we've discussed in the past, it's been thousands of thousands of dollars to invest in it. And the flow of our hiring kind of didn't justify that. So if you're only hiring, I don't know, let's say, five employees a year, are you gonna spend tens of thousands of dollars in developing a screening tool? So again, one of those challenges of being a smaller company is having the resources to develop proprietary tools. That said, I actually think they're pretty effective. So I think that... I've personally done them, so before I worked here, I worked for a larger company that did use those types of screening tools, kind of personality test, or the classic Myers-Briggs, things like that. When I've done those evaluations through that company on myself, the results are pretty spot on, so I think they probably are fairly effective tools. We just haven't been able to take advantage of them.

Interviewer: When it comes to managing integrated communications, should there be clear, set processes in place? Or should managers try to individualize workflows to best

fit each employee?

Participant F: I think the latter sounds a little Kumbaya and kind of like a good idea, but I think the reality is, the former, the more structured approach is probably best. 'Cause otherwise, you get people kind of off on their own ways of doing things, and they aren't necessarily always in sync. While on the one hand, I think it sounds somewhat appealing to kind of have this customized approach to management and training. I think probably I would err on the side of structure and consistency.

Interviewer: Should the same apply to communication?

Participant F: Internally or externally?

Interviewer: Internally.

Participant F: Yeah. I know I'm just a big believer in balance of role. Like I think there's sort of a happy medium. I think that if you push too much structure, you actually can inhibit good communications sometimes. So if you use a tool like a Basecamp, and you use it exclusively and with rigidity, sometimes I think, you miss some of the nuance and the personal connection, and the clarity that can come with one-to-one communication, right? So, yes, there's great benefits to having sort of trackable like a literal track of following the process of the flow on a project, but so many times I found that the written direction in a Basecamp, for example, misses some of the meaning or the tone or the

creativity behind that. And if you don't have that desk to desk, side by side conversation, it can be misinterpreted, though the next step in the work product can miss the mark and like you could have hit it better and sooner if you just said, "Hey, let's grab a couple of minutes together." On the flip side, if you only do the let's grab a couple of minutes together approach, then you miss the documentation and I don't know just the file organization and that sort of thing. So I think it's about balance, like having processes but not letting the processes cripple you.

Interviewer: As someone in a management position, how do you think feedback should be dispersed?

Participant F: Yeah. I think that the annual review thing is a little archaic. Nobody should get to an annual review and be surprised in my opinion. If there isn't dialogue back and forth about performance and opportunities for improvement, praise, through the course of the year, I think if that doesn't happen, unfortunately, you can get to those reviews and the person can be like, "Wow, that's not what I thought of myself," or "That's not where I thought I was headed." Or even be surprised on the positive side. They should know that through the course of the year. And I think it can be as informal as shooting somebody a, "Great job on this. I really like how you did, blah, blah, blah." So that you're not gathering all that feedback up and waiting until the end of the year because a person's performance could be improving and getting better if they heard positive feedback and even the constructive stuff like "You know what? This didn't really work for me, but let me explain why or how I think it could be improved." So, you probably need those

annual reviews more for the formal documentation of an employee's performance over the long haul if you think they're gonna be with the company for the long haul, but I'm a big fan of periodic communication through the course of the year.

Interviewer: So keep the annual performance review, but don't rely on just that?

Participant F: Keep it. It's oftentimes tied to salary and bonus discussion as well, but definitely supplement with the regular stuff.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on flex scheduling and the option of working remotely?

Participant F: I think it's probably about balance again on that front. I am somebody who's benefited from more flexible arrangement historically here. So, I believe it can be effective. I have a part time schedule. I work remotely sometimes, and I am in the office sometimes. But I think if everybody in an entire agency works like that, it would be challenging because I can recognize the challenges that my own arrangement create. So, I'm not foolish enough to think that the flexibility that I'm given doesn't sort of wreak havoc at times on project flow. So, I think it is something that people really value. So, I think if we could find ways to allow some flexibility, that would be a good thing. But that for the fast pace environment that we are with short deadlines and quick turnaround times, it could be problematic if everybody had those kinds of arrangements. And I know that it has been problematic at times when I'm not physically here. So I think that kind of

comes back to balance. Kind of finding out a way to accommodate that and allow it without it sort of getting out of control and ending up with nobody here. [chuckle]

Interviewer: Do you have any insights on how that balance could be achieved?

Participant F: I think it's probably maybe scheduling. In other words, if it's predictable, it's better. If it's, "Oh, this week, I'm not gonna be in on Wednesdays, and next week I'm not gonna be in on Fridays, and then the next week I'm gonna work from home," that could be... The unpredictability of it could be challenging. So maybe if everybody had their specific arrangement mapped out, almost... I'm a visual person, I picture a chart that says like, "Who's where, when." And that ensured coverage and in-office presence of a certain kind of volume. Then I think just that would be something that it's kind of funny to say that you need structure to have flexibility. [laughter] If you have structure, you have flexibility, I think it could be potentially good.

Interviewer: Would you say that agencies should focus on recruitment first and foremost or should that focus be on training?

Participant F: I would probably vote for more attention, which could be money, but it also could just be more focus on recruitment than on trying to train to the job at hand, if I were kind of picking. I think both are important, so I don't wanna say, "Oh, do it. It's all about recruiting and forget about training. If they don't come in the door with everything, then forget it." I don't think that's the case. But if I were kind of choosing or putting an

emphasis on one versus the other, I think I would probably focus on just investment, and I'm using investment to mean both time and money in kind of recruitment. So I think the main thing to me though is that you need to recruit all the time, even if you don't have a position open. So in other words, networking and talking to people that are out in the field and identifying potential employee prospects, even when you might not have a position available at that moment, just because our business is so volatile like the moment could come almost any week. And it's a good idea to already know who's out there, and know who might be looking, and know who you think does a great job, and kind of have some dialogue with those people, so that you can hopefully craft a position for them that would work versus waiting for the need to present itself and then having to scramble to recruit starting from scratch without the tools or the contacts.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Participant F: Well, I do think that... I don't know if this is just to integrated communications or just business excess in general. I do think it is all about the people. [chuckle] So great people, smart, solid work ethic, kind, hard-working. I think with a great team of people, I think you have the potential to be highly successful in any business. If you are relying upon... If you're relying too heavily upon having to kind of bring those people up to speed, train them in certain skills, wait for a long period of time for development, I think it's gonna be problematic. So I don't know, I just think when you find great people, you need to do everything you can to hire them and then to retain them because it's not easy to find great people. [chuckle]

Participant G

Interviewer: How long have you worked in the industry?

Participant G: About 25 years but I stated in-house PR and have moved through a few agencies.

Interviewer: And what is your current job title or role?

Participant G: Vice President of Public Relations

Interviewer: In your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant G: I'd say that integrated communications is kind of a buzzword. It really just means bringing all forms of communication under one roof.

Interviewer: Okay, so would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant G: I think so. I mean I think there could be a lot more crossover between different departments but the services are there.

Interviewer: Are there any specific obstacles that are standing in the way of integration?

Participant G: I think… I think there are little things that all get in the way.

Interviewer: Like?

Participant G: Well it's not natural for people to crossover. People like to have their job and do their job and then leave at 5 ya know what I mean? So this idea that your job might change and overlap with other teams… its nice in theory but hard to execute. Crossover creates confusion and there's always resistance I think.

Interviewer: Do you think that further training or professional development programs could help benefit this agency or help move it more towards integration?

Participant G: I think it could. Depends on what that training is and how its given really.

Interviewer: Are there any kind of specific areas that you think further training would be beneficial?

Participant G: That's gonna depend on who you ask. I think I need more tech training. I'm gonna date myself here but I still prefer using the phone and meeting with my clients in person. Of course, I've had the same clients for 10 years now. So I know I could benefit from tech training. But at the same time I don't know if its necessary since I think my clients like using the phone just as much as I do. But yea tech training. And maybe excel training because everything has to be in a spreadsheet these days.

Interviewer: Looking at skills training more specifically – what are your thoughts on cross training?

Participant G: Well I think cross training and integrated ya know really go hand in hand. So obviously that could help eliminate some of those crossover issues if we could get everyone kinda trained and ready to go in any area. Obviously everyone would have their focus, their main job that they are best at. But cross training… yea I think… cross training would be good to get that depth.

Interviewer: What obstacles stand in the way of training?

Participant G: Big corporations invest a lot in training programs since they promote from within a lot of the time. As a smaller agency, we don't have a ton of money to invest in training so we have to be more careful about where it goes. I think we all really like the

idea of training and obviously wish we could train and train and train but we can't just afford to do that. So really just that cost is holding us back a lot. And time I guess but as they say... Time is money.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for providing that training? Managers? Employees?

Participant G: I think it would be more on the managers than employees. I think if the managers see a need they should make sure they take care of that and really they should invest in employees because that will be what keeps them profitable in the long run. Obviously employees can step up but it should be more on the owner.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be a priority during the hiring process to look for that passion/self-motivation in applicants?

Participant G: I think that's obviously a great quality but I don't know if it would be my number 1 priority when I'm looking at people. I think you need to look for the total package so not just motivated but smart and hardworking, punctual.

Interviewer: If you were screening job applicants, is there anything in particular that you think might help signify whether or not someone is a self-motivated learner?

Participant G: I think when you're talking to someone you can get a good read on them

especially when you've been doing it for years and you start to make those connections. So yea I just think you talk and you feel them out and see what they can bring to the table.

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on personality testing? Do you think that that's something small to mid-size agencies should consider?

Participant G: I do not know much… I don't think I've ever taken a personality test so that wouldn't be in my wheelhouse but I know some bigger companies really rely on them so there must be some merit.

Interviewer: Do you think agencies should implement streamlined processes for management or do you think work flows should be more individualized?

Participant G: Well I think that's one of the main appeals of working at a small agency is that there is more room to move and breathe and you don't have to be stuck in those strict ways. But there's a fine line because too much freedom can make things really chaotic in this fast kind of work. So I guess yea have some set channels and instructions and try to follow them but also leave room to breathe.

Interviewer: What about looking at communication channels? Do you think channels of communication should be set and consistent as well?

Participant G: Well again I'm going to date myself but I think there are too many types of communication in the office. People are texting, emailing using these little chats and its overkill I really think. Your generation doesn't like to pick up the phone and I think people need to just stick to the phone and email because otherwise…

Interviewer: When it comes to feedback - what expectations do you have?

Participant G: Well ya know I have been doing this job for so long now I don't… I mean feedback is always good but I think it is more for the younger employees because they are new and learning. I like when ya know teams share their successes and you can kinda "congratulations" and stay in the know. But day-to-day I guess maybe it doesn't relate to me because I'm kind of a team of one right now so I don't really get or give feedback.

Interviewer: Do you think annual performance reviews are best-practice in a small to mid-sized agency? Or should managers move away from those all together?

Participant G: Well I think they still have a place. Man I'm really showing how old I am but yea I still think they have value because its good to have that official review. You need that almost as evidence if you want to fight for a raise or promotion and its good to just have on both ends.

Participant H

Interviewer: How long have you worked in the industry?

Participant H: About 6 years.

Interviewer: And what is your current job title or role?

Participant H: I am a brand manager.

Interviewer: In your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant H: Uhm I guess its just different people and teams working together to kinda use all different types of marketing and hopefully make a really great campaign.

Interviewer: Okay. So with that as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant H: Yea I think so. I think we lean more towards brand and PR because that is just how the old owner leaned and he was a big PR guy but we are definitely moving towards more integration now with this new owner. I think we are really trying to

increase our digital team and just get more skills and people in that area.

Interviewer: Do you think that there might be more room for integration?

Participant H: Oh yea. Like I said we could really grow in some areas like digital and I think even design we could use more strength.

Interviewer: Are there any specific obstacles that are standing in the way of integration?

Participant H: Well I dunno I think that as a small agency we were struggling in a lot of ways. I mean we were as integrated as could be expected I think of an agency our size. But still yea I'd say being a small agency is kind of an obstacle in itself.

Interviewer: What role do you think training plays in managing integrated communications?

Participant H: Well obviously training is a good thing and could definitely help but again I think because of our size we might not be able to pull off a ton of training. We don't have that many employees to spare so if one has to take a day off for training its like that work just piles up and someone has to do it. So yea… I think training would be great. More training would be great and helpful but how can we get it done, ya know?

Interviewer: Are there any kind of specific areas that you think further training would be beneficial?

Participant H: Uhm you know that really is… Kind of like I was saying we need more skill in the digital area so maybe if we could get some training sessions or whatever in that area then maybe we could utilize the employees we already have a little bit more. But outside of that I think everyone could benefit from some content training.

Interviewer: So would you qualify that as cross training? Or what are your thoughts on cross training?

Participant H: Yea definitely cross training. I think that's the key because you know with integrated campaigns teams overlap and employees might be asked to perform tasks outside of their skillset. Or members of one team might need to try and pitch another team's services to potential clients. I think cross-training is necessary to make sure all of our employees can speak to all disciplines at least a little bit to make sure there aren't any big fallouts. And yea I think maybe for our agency personally digital would be the first area to get that cross training. But if we had the time and money I think there are a lot of different ways we could go with it.

Interviewer: What obstacles stand in the way of training? You've mentioned time and money.

Participant H: Yea I have and yea definitely time and money. It great to talk about cross training and getting better at integration but really without time and without money what can we do? So yea definitely… I think the new owner is gonna up that budget so maybe we can get more serious about training and cross training. Which would be great because then we can focus on those areas of digital and content and really get stronger as an agency.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for providing that training? Managers? Employees?

Participant H: Uhm ya know I wanna say managers first. Because if they aren't at least trying to provide some training and showing how great it is then why should employees care ya know? If the people in charge don't care then the employees won't. Or if the employees do care and the managers don't then those employees might quit and look for a job where they care ya know? So yea managers first. But also if the managers care and are willing to put money behind it then the employees need to be ready to run with it. So maybe both but I think managers come first.

Interviewer: Do you think it should be a priority during the hiring process to look for that passion/self-motivation in applicants?

Participant H: Oh yea definitely. I think especially in an industry that moves this fast you

need to be really passionate about what you do or… if you don't have that drive then you'll fall behind ya know?

Interviewer: If you were screening job applicants, is there anything in particular that you think might help signify whether or not someone is a self-motivated learner?

Participant H: Hmmm. I think… I think that its just a gut feeling. I mean maybe there are things they can say that might make you think that but maybe they are just saying what you want to hear, ya know? So I think it almost comes down to a gut feeling of are they telling the truth or will they be a good fit?

Interviewer: What are your thoughts on personality testing? Do you think that that's something small to mid-size agencies should consider?

Participant H: Oh yea I think personality testing is fun and maybe different but I think it can really work. I have never done one, never taken one but I have heard some that are incredibly accurate. I think, with an integrated agency especially maybe, it would be nice to test and make sure personality-wise candidates are a good fit for the agency and culture.

Interviewer: Do you think it's better to have really streamlined processes for management or do you think work flows should be more individualized?

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Participant H: Well I'm a type… For me personally I like structure. I like having a set

"step 1, step 2, step 3." Ya know "if this then do this" kind of thing. And I think overall

an agency functions best with that system in place. It reduces errors and makes projects

move more quickly. But then again, I know that's not how everyone works and so being

such a close, overlapping agency it might be okay to allow a little room for

customization. I don't know, overall I think structure is best.

Interviewer: What about looking at communication channels? Do you think channels of

communication should be set and consistent as well?

Participant H: Well I guess it can be less structured. Usually its off the cuff and kind of a

free for all. Which might be unavoidable due to the fast-pace nature of this industry.

Sometimes it's a problem when there's a dispute and its like I swear I sent that email but

the person never got it. I think I still lean towards structure but with communication I

think we can be more flexible and allow whatever means of communication works best

for each project, each team.

Interviewer: When it comes to feedback - what expectations do you have?

Participant H: I personally am a huge proponent of immediate, honest feedback. I don't

like to bs around and if there's a problem with the work then we talk and we fix it and do

better next time. I think again, this is a fast industry and feedback should be just as fast so we don't fall behind or keep making the same mistakes over and over.

Interviewer: Do you think annual performance reviews are best-practice in a small to mid-sized agency? Or should managers move away from those all together?

Participant H: Honestly I think we can take them or leave them. I think they have some merit but I don't think they are necessary. Like I said feedback should be always happening always flowing. And if I feel like I need a raise or I deserve a promotion then I will schedule a meeting with my supervisor and I won't wait around for that annual review. The same goes if there's a problem, why wait just take care of it.

Interviewer: What do you think of flex scheduling or the option of working remotely?

Participant H: I think that its almost unavoidable and will only become more popular. Everyone has lives outside of work and I think people are starting to value their outside life more and more and are less willing to sacrifice that for work. So yea I think more and more people will start working from home or working weird hours.

Participant I

Interviewer: How long have you worked in the industry?

Participant I: About 2 years.

Interviewer: And what is your current job title or role?

Participant I: I'm Junior Art Director.

Interviewer: In your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant I: Uhm I guess just a mix of communications. Not just one kind but all the teams working on the same project.

Interviewer: Okay. So with that as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant I: Yea I think so.

Interviewer: Do you think that there might be more room for integration?

Participant I: Yea I think we are gonna get more employees in here and that will help if we can cover more ground and offer more services.

Interviewer: Are there any specific obstacles that are standing in the way of integration?

Participant I: Just cause we are small right now. Everything is always insane and people don't have time to really do anything other than go go go on their tasks.

Interviewer: What role do you think training plays in managing integrated communications?

Participant I: Training would be cool. We don't have a ton of training here right now but I think if I really wanted to learn something they'd help me figure it out.

Interviewer: Are there any kind of specific areas that you think further training would be beneficial?

Participant I: I mean I wish people knew more about design. They expect sometime for me to turnover a project in an insane amount of time that just can't be done. Or they throw edits my way last minute and just think I should be able to crank it out. I think if they knew more about design and what goes into it maybe it wouldn't be so crazy.

Interviewer: So would you qualify that as cross training? Or what are your thoughts on cross training?

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Participant I: I guess for me personally I don't do anything other than design. I attend

brand meetings if they are relevant to me but that's about as much as I cross. I think cross

training would be cool but I don't really see how we'd have the time right now.

Interviewer: What types of trainings do you think work best for an integrated agency?

Participant I: You mean subject or like…

Interviewer: Type as in… hands-on training, webinars, conferences….

Participant I: Oh okay. Sometimes if I watch someone else do it I think I get it, but then

when I go and try it on my own I can't remember how. I think it would be better to drive

the training so I'm doing it while I learn.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for providing that training? Managers?

Employees?

Participant I: I mean it probably depends on type like you said. If there's a conference

coming up maybe the managers can get that together and organize some employees to go. But I think I can take it upon myself to watch a tutorial or ya know a webinar or something if I think it will help me personally.

Interviewer: Do you think it's better to have really streamlined processes for management or do you think work flows should be more individualized?

Participant I: I think streamlined. It has been crazy around here since we lost our project manager and I think we all got to see just how important that was and want to get back to more organized work days.

Interviewer: What about looking at communication channels? Do you think channels of communication should be set and consistent as well?

Participant I: I guess so. I like that people just walk over to my desk cause then they can visually see how the project is coming and its just easier. But I guess for assigning tasks there should be a platform.

Interviewer: When it comes to feedback - what expectations do you have?

Participant I: I think I rely pretty heavily on feedback. Usually my stuff will go through a

lot of rounds of edits from people here and the client. Feedback is pretty important.

Interviewer: Do you think annual performance reviews are best-practice in a small to mid-sized agency? Or should managers move away from those all together?

Participant I: I don't think we really need them. I just sat down with the owner and VP today. It just happens when it's needed.

Participant J

Interviewer: How long have you worked in the industry?

Participant J: 16 years now.

Interviewer: And what is your current job title or role?

Participant J: I am currently a brand manager but I work remotely now.

Interviewer: In your own words, how would you define integrated communications?

Participant J: Really I think the key is figuring out what your client wants and what are the best methods you can use to get them there. So the integration comes from being able to use digital or pr or social media or whatever it takes to get them the desired results.

Interviewer: Okay. So with that as a working definition, would you say that this agency is integrated?

Participant J: We have a large variety of services we offer to help clients meet their goals and I would classify our agency as fully integrated.

Interviewer: Do you think that there might be more room for integration?

Participant J: I don't know that I would say we should offer more services, but there is room for growth on each team. For example, we have vast social media offerings right now but we could grow by adding more employees to our social media team. We could become faster and more adept.

Interviewer: Are there any specific obstacles that are standing in the way of integration?

Participant J: For our agency we are short-staffed. We have grown so quickly and have not been able to find talent at the same rate.

Interviewer: What role do you think training plays in managing integrated communications?

Participant J: Training plays a huge role. Not only should you recruit the best but you need to continue training them to make sure they stay the best and as an agency we stay innovative.

Interviewer: Are there any kind of specific areas that you think further training would be beneficial?

Participant J: I don't think there's just one. It depends on the employee, where they need to grow.

Interviewer: Who should be responsible for providing that training? Managers? Employees?

Participant J: That will depend on the training and the employee. You need involved managers and you need passionate employees. It is easy to say it is all on management but that isn't the case. I've been in that situation before where I provide training but the employee isn't really interested. It ends up just being a waste.

Interviewer: Do you think it's better to have really streamlined processes for management or do you think work flows should be more individualized?

Participant J: I say make it as organized as possible. As we grow we need to stay organized and stay on top of it so that we don't lose control and let things slip.

Interviewer: What about looking at communication channels? Do you think channels of communication should be set and consistent as well?

Participant J: I think communication also needs to be organized, maybe even more so than it is right now. There can be a lot of confusion and resistance when employees aren't on the same page. If brand and digital have different ideas and don't communicate effectively, the final product will be sloppy.

APPENDIX E

Project Proposal

The Role of Training in Managing an Integrated Communications Approach

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Abstract

This project proposal focuses on discussing the literature surrounding integrated marketing communications. Specifically it focuses on defining IMC, explaining the growing trend towards integration, examining who can benefit from integration, how they can do so and what obstacles are standing in the way. The proposed research, to be carried out in the spring, utilizes participant observation and semi-structured, in-depth interviews to analyze the role of training within advertising, public relations and integrated agencies. This training may take many forms such as education on how to effectively incorporate new and emerging technologies.

Keywords: integrated marketing communications, integrated communications, grounded theory, participant observation, interviews

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As an undergraduate at the Missouri School of Journalism I studied strategic communication. Through this emphasis area I was able to gain hands-on experience in areas such as PR, digital, copywriting, creative, advertising and social media. I saw firsthand the extraordinary campaigns that emerged from thoughtfully and creatively combining these various disciplines. I took for granted that everyone worked with these integrated methods. However, as I began edging closer to the real world I was surprised to learn that many practitioners still utilized each of these methods in separate silos.

Based on this insight, I quickly realized that I wanted to spend my career at an agency that allowed me to continue working with the integrated approach the Missouri School of Journalism instilled in me. However, I wanted more than that. I wanted to understand this integrated approach inside and out so that I could emerge as a thought leader in my field. Furthermore, I wanted to help other practitioners and agencies move toward integration as well. Thus, I decided to pursue a master's project that not only would expand my knowledge of integrated communications, but also give me the opportunity to help bring additional knowledge to the field.

This project will allow me to gain hands-on experience working at an integrated agency. I will be able to hone my professional skills and apply what I've learned to real-world projects. Additionally, I will be able to answer my research questions about the role of training for agencies utilizing integrated communications through on-site observation and interviews.

CHAPTER TWO: PROFESSIONAL SKILLS COMPONENT

I. Timeline

On January 18, 2015, I will begin an internship at Twist STL (http://www.twiststl.com/).

Twist is a fully integrated, mid-sized agency located in St. Louis, Missouri. According to

AgencyFinder.com, a mid-sized agency is one that has 10-75 employees (Advertising

Agency Definition and Description, 2015). Twist offers a variety of services including

brand management, design, digital, public relations, and social. These different

disciplines are integrated to create strong, consistent campaigns.

I will be working Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. until my internship

ends on May 2, 2016.

II. Area of Emphasis

My project falls within the emphasis area of strategic communication. Both my education

and professional experience have qualified me to pursue this project. During my time as

an undergraduate and graduate student at the Missouri School of Journalism, I have

studied principles and theories of strategic communication. Professionally, previous

experience as a PR intern allowed me to apply what I've learned and improve my

practical skills.

III. Detailed Description of Work

As a brand management intern, I am first and foremost a writer. I will assist in

writing web copy, e-newsletters, social media posts, ad copy and general promotional

copy. However, I will be performing a variety of other tasks as well. I will develop media materials, conduct media outreach, identify social media trends and build client content calendars for Twitter and Facebook. I will compile clip books and media trackers of client media placement. Finally, I will conduct research on client's products, services, competitors and target markets.

I will have the opportunity to work on both national and local accounts such as The Container Store, YoCrunch, The Ritz-Carlton and Annie Gunn's (http://www.twiststl.com/industry). I will work alongside the brand management team in brainstorming, planning and executing creative campaigns. This experience will educate me on the ins and outs of the industry, as well as help develop my resume and portfolio.

I will receive most of my assignments from the Brand Managers and Associate Brand Manager. They will supervise my work and provide feedback when applicable. I may also be given tasks from other Twist team members. For example, I may work alongside the digital marketing team for a time. I am open to accepting these different tasks and responsibilities.

IV. Physical Evidence

By the conclusion of my internship I will have acquired numerous pieces to add to my portfolio. These materials will take various forms such as press materials, ads, blogs, and content calendars. I will include all materials in the final project report.

CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS COMPONENT

The analysis component of this project will consist of scholarly research. My research topic is integrated communications. It directly applies to my professional skills component, as I will be working in an agency that specializes in this approach.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As the framework for my research, I will be using a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Charmaz (2006), grounded theory is distinguished from other theories since it intentionally blurs the distinction between data collection and analysis and allows for both to be done simultaneously.

There are innumerable examples of grounded theory being successfully employed in previous research within the field of journalism. For example, Vivian B. Martin successfully utilized grounded theory in her study of daily news regimens. She sought to explain the process of how people interact with news every day. Working from a grounded approach, Martin conducted 86 face-to-face interviews as well as a document analysis of Internet discussion groups around various news events, news articles, surveys and industry reports, letters to the editor, informal letters and emails sent to writers and editors, and college student essays (Martin, 2008).

According to Charmaz (2006), the main advantage of grounded theory is that you may learn about gaps in your data during the earliest stages of research. This gives you the opportunity to find sources of needed data and fill the gaps.

Grounded theory will inform both the methods I use and the way I conduct my research. Through simultaneous participant observation and individual interviews I aim to explore the role of training in managing an integrated communications approach.

CHAPTER FIVE: LITERATURE REVIEW

I. Introduction

Traditionally, marketing efforts have been divided by category. Agencies developed separate campaigns for advertising, sales promotion, public relations, etc. However, the practices of marketing and public relations are rapidly changing to a more integrated approach blurring previously established lines. According to Convergence of Marketing (2014), experts estimate that the pace of this change will accelerate in the next five years.

Numerous agencies are moving towards integration. For example, FleishmanHillard recently rebranded in an attempt to become an integrated marketing communications agency that offers services like advertising and social media marketing in addition to public relations (Elliott, 2013).

The following literature review defines IMC and explains the growing trend towards integration. It looks at who can benefit from using IMC, how practitioners can take advantage of IMC and examines some obstacles standing in the way of integration.

I. Defining Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Coined in the late 1980s in an attempt to define marketing methods in the post mass-marketing era, the term "integrated marketing communications" caused some confusion in the minds of industry professionals (Smith, 1995). Confusion about the definition of IMC still exists today. Rather than relying on one official definition, most industry professionals have their own ideas of what integrated marketing communications means to them. However, there are several key concepts present in most working definitions of IMC.

The most recurrent concept is consistency. Many integrated approaches focus on consistency of message across the elements of the campaign including advertising and public relations. Smith (1995) discusses Lane Bryant as an example of this. When Lane Bryant aimed to maximize credibility and sales impact within the African-American market, it used a coordinated approach to create a consistent message, voice and look for all of its marketing efforts (Smith, 1995). Lane Bryant coordinated its mailings and in-store events with a five-city mall tour. This tour ran in tandem with a new ad that offered a store coupon. The integrated campaign also utilized radio advertisements and publicity in local markets to build awareness and draw consumers to the events (Smith, 1995.)

Another concept that is consistent in the literature is consumer interaction. Technological developments now allow for companies to talk with consumers rather than talk at them. It also allows for consumers to talk to each other. This makes marketing communications a dynamic process. In order to take advantage of these dynamics, Tom Duncan, the University of Colorado's IMC program head, says that building relationships through consumer interaction should be the goal of IMC (as cited in Smith, 1995).

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According to Persuit (2013), IMC moves away from the methods of mass communication. It does not view communication as a one-way, linear model. Instead communication is an interactive and multidimensional process (Persuit, 2013). This multidimensional communication model allows marketers to interact with consumers to build strong relationships and brand connection. Research by Lang and Ewoldsen (2010) adds to this line of thinking. Their book stresses the importance of feedback and warns against ignoring the two-way nature of communication (Lang & Ewoldsen, 2010). According to Lang and Ewoldsen (2010), incorporating feedback into a campaign leaves room to change something and then change it back or change it in another way. This gives practitioners more flexibility in their campaigns.

Finally, most marketing practitioners agree that IMC utilizes a variety of marketing disciplines. IMC methods stem from the belief that the development of new media does not reduce the value of traditional marketing techniques. Rather than choosing between the different techniques, IMC methods aim for seamless integration of old and new techniques (Brand, 2009). When campaigns are built in this way, content and strategies can build off of and enhance each other. According to an article in PR News (Anonymous, 2009), fusing the best of each discipline strengthens a campaign. This article offers "brand storytelling" as an example of a successful integrated marketing tactic (Anonymous, 2009). Ed Woodcock, director of narrative at Aesop marketing agency, defines brand storytelling as the application of narrative thinking and storytelling techniques to define brands, inform strategy and structure creative activity (Woodcock, 2011). Brand storytelling borrows from each discipline; taking the credibility of public relations, the value of advertising and the measurability of online (Anonymous, 2009).

Based on an analysis of the literature listed above, the researcher will use the following definition for IMC for the purposes of this project: Integrated marketing communications is a strategic approach that utilizes a variety of marketing disciplines to create clear, consistent and effective campaigns that interact with consumers in a powerful way. According Persuit (2013), IMC is human communication. It allows brands to interact with consumers in a natural, holistic and human way.

III. Explaining the Growing Trend toward Integration

Most practitioners agree that IMC is a necessity in today's industry. However, this was not always the case. In order to understand IMC's surge in popularity in recent years, a brief analysis of the history of IMC is necessary.

According to an article by Larsen and Len-Rios (2006), IMC developed in the 1980s and 1990s. As the industry moved away from mass marketing, communication professionals had to adapt.

One reason IMC surged in popularity is that it was cost efficient. According to a study by Rose and Miller (1994), an increased emphasis on bottom-line profits served as an incentive for agencies to become more integrated. It was more cost efficient for agencies to add in-house functions than it was to contract out. When the recession caused clients to reduce their communication budgets, it became crucial that agencies figure out how to get their clients the most bang for their buck (Anonymous, 2009).

The surge in integrated marketing communications can also be attributed to the growing popularity of digital marketing. Developments in digital technology forced

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communication professionals to integrate (Anonymous, 2009; Persuit, 2013). These developments led to the introduction of many new media channels. It became important for agencies to be able to develop campaigns that could carry across every media channel (Integrated Marketing, 2012).

Also, a perceived need for IMC on the part of the client caused many agencies to become full-service (Rose & Miller, 1994). Clients began to believe that they needed an integrated marketing campaign. Many agencies started adding more functions to meet the demands of their clients and stay current in the communications industry.

IV. Who Can Benefit from Using Integrated Methods?

Rosemary Ryan, online editor at B&T Weekly, insists that the key to staying on top in the communications industry is to become integral to your clients. According to Ryan (2005), real partnerships exist when clients view marketing practitioners as essential to success, not as interchangeable commodities. Ryan contends that the best way for practitioners to become integral is through the utilization of IMC (Ryan, 2005).

IMC should be on the agenda for companies who advertise across multiple media channels, target niche markets or care about the accountability behind their campaigns (Integrated Marketing, 2012). As this depiction arguably fits all companies today, all marketing practitioners and clients alike can benefit from integrated methods.

V. How Practitioners Can Take Advantage of IMC

There are many different strategies when it comes to implementing a successful integrated marketing plan. Careful examination of each strategy allows for an understanding of how practitioners can successfully utilize IMC.

Brand (2009), suggests looking at marketing in a different way. Traditionally, communication professionals envision the different areas of marketing as separated by a line. He suggests instead envisioning a wagon wheel diagram to reflect the nonlinear, integrated approach (Brand, 2009).

According to Jones (2008), the customer has become the media. Consumers report their experiences with brands through the use of online sites such as Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. This shift in who is telling the brand story creates an opportunity for communications professionals (Jones, 2008). Integrated marketing campaigns should be developed around the stories customers are telling (Jones, 2008).

Some practitioners argue that the best strategy for implementing a successful integrated marketing plan is to switch the focus from attitudes to behaviors. Traditional marketing focuses on the attitudes of customers. Persuit (2013) suggests IMC practitioners focus on the behaviors of customers. According to her study, the behaviors of customers more accurately indicate how they will act in the future (Persuit, 2013). Also, focusing on behaviors allows for better measurement and evaluation (Persuit, 2013).

Another strategy is to focus on branding. Many practitioners argue that branding is the most effective marketing tool (Anonymous, 2009; Jones, 2008; Pursuit, 2013). A recent study conducted by ARAnet and Opinion Research Corp. showed that consumers are far

more likely to take action when reading online articles that include brand information (51%), as compared to search engine advertising (39%) or banner advertising (25%) (as cited in Anonymous, 2009).

VI. Obstacles Standing in the Way of Integration

Communications practitioners must overcome multiple obstacles in order to successfully manage IMC. An analysis of the literature has revealed three major hurdles that communications practitioners face: organizational barriers, the inability to measure success and a lack of training.

The biggest hurdles communications practitioners face when trying to implement integrated marketing systems are organizational ones (Smith, 1995). Eliminating silos and moving to cross-organizational integration can be difficult. For example, IBM moved from centralized communications functions to a decentralized team approach, and then to a marketing services "account manager" approach. Then, the company dismantled its vertical marketing functions completely in favor of cross-functional teams (Smith, 1995). Much of this organizational trouble stems from marketing departments' fears of losing resources and decision-making power (Smith, 1995).

The second hurdle is the inability of agencies to measure the success and impact of integrated marketing campaigns (Smith, 1995). Paul Root, president of the Marketing Sciences Institute in Cambridge, says that companies are implementing IMC, but want to know how to evaluate it, how much to commit to their overall communications budget, and how to justify these decisions (Smith, 1995). According to Rachel Hatton, planning

director at Ogilvy Group, measuring both long-term and real-time presents a challenge for agencies (as cited in Derrick, 2011). Angela Jeffrey, U.S. Strategy Director at Salience Insight, adds to this opinion by saying that most communication professionals lack the analytics training necessary to measure integrated marketing campaigns effectively (as cited in Convergence of Marketing, 2014). According to Kliatchko (2008), IMC approaches should look to measure behavioral responses and outcomes. This differs from traditional approaches to measurement, which look to evaluate communication effects and outputs (Kliatchko, 2008). For example, an IMC approach would measure purchases and financial returns, while a traditional approach would measure brand recall and what media placements were bought (Schultz & Walters, 1997). Therefore, the drive for accountability is the core of IMC as IMC programs must be accountable for business results (Kliatchko, 2008).

The third main hurdle communications practitioners face is a lack of training in integrated marketing strategies. Rose and Miller (1994) argue that while more and more clients are demanding an integrated marketing campaign, most communications practitioners are not equipped to develop such a campaign.

Professional training and development can take many forms such as seminars, workshops, continuing education courses, and self-study (Rose & Miller, 1994). While graduate school is an option, most professionals won't abandon job security for the sake of obtaining a degree (Rose & Miller, 1994). Thus, training needs to be designed around the needs and schedules of working professionals (Rose & Miller, 1994).

Rose and Miller (1994) conducted a self-administered, national mail survey of American Advertising Federation (AAF) and Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) members to identify and compare the perceived educational needs of advertising and public relations practitioners. The survey was completed by 564 individuals for an overall response rate of 25% (Rose & Miller, 1994). They found that more than 74.1% of advertising professionals and more than 80.1% of public relations professionals conveyed an interest in further professional training (Rose & Miller, 1994). For both groups of professionals, the main reason for wanting training is to keep current in the profession (Rose & Miller, 1994). Another motive for training is as a means of career advancement (Rose & Miller, 1994).

The need for training does not just affect those at a professional level. According to Larsen & Len-Rios, it has also affected the education and development of communication students. As the line separating marketing disciplines becomes more blurred, employers expect to see related changes in the students' skillsets (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). Larsen and Len-Rios (2006) conducted a web-based survey of educators teaching courses in advertising, public relations or strategic communication designed to explore the current status of curriculum integration from the perspective of an educator. A total of 197 surveys were completed, yielding a 41% response rate (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). They found that only 13% of respondents said their programs were partially integrated (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). Furthermore, only 23% of respondents said they believed the curricula in their program would become more integrated in the next three years (Larsen & Len-Rios, 2006). These findings show a disconnect between what

skillsets employers expect students to have and what skillsets are actually being taught to students.

VII. Conclusion

In summation, this review of the literature shows that integrated marketing communications is a rising trend in the industry. IMC has become a popular strategic approach to marketing, thanks to a growth in digital marketing, a demand for IMC by clients and its cost efficient nature. The benefits of IMC are not limited to certain agencies or categories. All marketing practitioners and clients alike can benefit from integrated methods. However, they will have to overcome organizational hurdles, measurement complications and a general lack of training.

For the purpose of this study, the topic will be broadened from integrated marketing communications to integrated communications. According to Clarke Caywood (2012), the use of the term "integrated communications" bridges the gap between academic communications, public relations and advertising. Using this term will allow the researcher to examine all means of communication that an agency may utilize.

Based on this information, the researcher proposes an examination of one of the obstacles of integration, specifically a general lack of training. To that end, a qualitative study will be conducted to answer the following two research questions that could be beneficial to the communications industry.

RQ1: What is the role of training within an agency in managing an integrated approach?

RQ2: How can agencies utilizing an integrated approach best meet the training needs of employees?

CHAPTER SIX: METHODOLOGY

I. Research Design

I will obtain approval from the Institutional Review Board before beginning any research.

The first step is data collection. I plan to use two different methods: participation observation and individual interviews. According to Charmaz (2006), the two methods work well together as participant observation at interview and field sites helps to facilitate interviews. Interviews are the primary method of collecting data, but participant observation gives a distinctive insight, revealing what people are really doing, instead of what they say they are doing (Laitinen & Kaunonen & Astedt-Kurki, 2014)

II. Participant Observation Plan

i. **Intro:** Participant observation is a data collection method that reveals the reality of daily life in a specific context (Laitinen & Kaunonen & Astedt-Kurki, 2014). From the start, participant observation in a grounded theory study takes a different form than other types of ethnographies (Charmaz, 2006). Priority is given to the studied phenomenon; so grounded theorists study what is happening in the setting and make a conceptual rendering of these actions (Charmaz, 2006).

For the participant observation, I intend to spend time at the agency where I will do the professional skills component of my project.

ii. **Open coding:** In open coding, the incidents, events and happenings observed are

analyzed as potential indicators of phenomena and given conceptual labels

(Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, if I observe that a participant spreads his

or her activities over the morning, taking a coffee break between tasks, then I

might label this phenomenon as "pacing." If I observe other incidents, and upon

comparison to the first, notice they resemble the same phenomena, those incidents

will also be labeled as "pacing." According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), only by

comparing incidents and naming like phenomena with the same term can a

theorist accumulate the basic units for theory. These comparisons assist the

researcher in guarding against bias, since they lead the researcher to challenge

concepts with fresh data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Next, categories must be developed and rated (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Concepts

that pertain to the same phenomena may be grouped into categories; however, not all

concepts become categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Corbin and Strauss

(1990), categories are generated through the same analytic process of making

comparisons to highlight similarities and differences, but categories are higher in level

and more abstract than concepts. Continuing with the example presented above, in

addition to the concept of "pacing" I might also generate the concepts "resting," "taking a

lunch break," and "chatting at the water cooler." While these concepts are different in

practice, they seem to be part of a similar process: spreading out activities to avoid

burnout at work. Thus, they can be grouped under a more abstract category of "Self

Strategies for Avoiding Burnout."

The next step is sampling. In grounded theory, sampling proceeds in terms of concepts, their properties, dimensions and variations rather than in terms of specific individuals, units of time and so on (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, I will not be sampling employees of the integrated agencies. Instead, I will be sampling the incidents, events and happenings that represent the work done by these employees as well as the conditions that facilitate, interrupt or prevent their work and the consequences that result from their work. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), it is through this theoretical sampling that representativeness of concepts and consistency are achieved.

iii. **Axial Coding:** In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories and the relationship is tested against the data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). First, I must make sure to account for patterns and variations. The data must be examined for regularity and for an understanding of where the regularity is not apparent (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, if I notice that the Vice President of Brand Management leads all of the brand management team meetings I will note that as a pattern. If, however, I also note that when the Vice President of Brand Management is extremely busy they delegate the leadership role to the Senior Brand Manager, then I will note that as a variation of the original pattern.

Second, I must be sure to develop and verify my hypotheses as much as possible during the research process. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), as hypotheses about relationships among categories are developed they should be taken back into the field for checking and revision. A key feature of grounded theory is that hypotheses are constantly revised during the research until they hold true for all of the evidence concerning the

phenomena under study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Continuing with the example presented above, if I hypothesize that the Senior Brand Manager will lead brand management team meetings whenever the VP of Brand Management is extremely busy, then I must return to the office and continue participant observation to verify that this hypothesis holds true. If during this continued participant observation I notice that the Associate Brand Manager leads a brand management team meeting then I must revise my hypothesis.

iv. **Selective Coding:** Selective coding is the process by which all categories are unified around a "core" category (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), these core categories will represent the central phenomena of the study. For example, to determine my core category I will ask myself, "What is the main analytic idea presented in this research?"

During this stage of the research process, poorly developed categories (categories for which few properties have been uncovered in the data) will be identified (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The researcher must return to the field to obtain data that will fill the gaps in order for the theory to have explanatory power (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Continuing with the example presented above, if I determine that my category "Self Strategies for Avoiding Burnout" is lacking conceptual density, then I will return to the office and continue participant observation until that category is filled-in with descriptive detail.

v. **Writing Memos:** In order to keep track of all the concepts, categories, properties, hypotheses and questions that arise during my participant observation, I will implement a memo-writing system. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990),

writing memos should begin with the first coding session and continue until the end of the research. Memos vary in form and length according to the stage of research and type of coding (Corbin & Straus, 1990). Through these memos researchers explore, explain and hypothesize emerging data. For example, when coding the concept "pacing," the accompanying memo may elaborate on the concept with names of participants, specific activities, language used, my interpretations of the data and the hypotheses developed. I believe that taking field notes during the participant observation will draw unwanted attention, so I will make notes at the end of each workday.

vi. **Limitations:** There are some disadvantages to participant observation that must be addressed. First, participant observation is time consuming. The restraints on my time will limit my ability to get a holistic understanding of the day-to-day activities in the agency. However, I will try to remain focused on my research questions in order to get the necessary information in a short period of time. Second, it is difficult to document the data. It will be hard to keep track of everything that is important and I will have to largely rely on my memory and be sure to expand my memos as soon as possible to limit losses.

III. Interviews

i. **Introduction:** In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Interviews are the primary method of collecting

data in qualitative research (Nunkoosing, 2005). According to Charmaz (2001), the advantages of in-depth qualitative interviews for conducting grounded theory analysis are unassailable. One advantage is that the interviewer assumes more direct control over the construction of data than does a researcher using most other methods, such as ethnography or textual analysis (Charmaz, 2001). Also, since grounded theory methods depend on flexibility, the combination of flexibility and control inherent in in-depth interviewing techniques fits grounded theory strategies (Charmaz, 2001).

To maintain the flexibility that is an integral part of grounded theory, I will conduct semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviewing, a guide is used, with questions and topics that must be covered (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). I will function as the moderator of the semi-structured, in-depth interviews and I will aim to make the interviews feel more like a conversation than a Q+A session. According to Harrell and Bradley (2009), this kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational. Ideally, these "low pressure" interviews will allow the participants to speak freely and honestly. I will apply the codes that were determined during the participant observation and look at the participants' viewpoints and feelings rather than simply trying to gather facts. The interview questions may change as new data is gathered and analyzed; however, the questions will be standardized and probes may be provided to ensure I cover the correct material.

ii. **Process** I will conduct in-depth interviews with employees from various public relations, advertising and integrated agencies nationwide. I will begin interviews

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with employees of Twist STL. If I am unable to reach a saturation point with these interviews I will move to other agencies. For example, additional interviews may be conducted with employees from Catapult PR, VML and Barkley. Ideally, the sample will include both men and women with varying amounts of experience in the communications industry. However, due to limited time and connections I will use a convenience sample. A convenience sample is a non-probability sample of research participants or subjects selected not for their representativeness, but for their accessibility or handiness, such as when university researchers use their own students (Colman, 2015).

Due to the nature of grounded theory, there is no strict criteria for sample size. According to Charmaz (1990), the sample should depend upon developing the range of relevant conceptual categories, saturating those categories and fully explaining the data. However, I will plan for approximately 12 interviews given that previous research has shown that saturation, for the most part, usually occurs by the time 12 interviews have been analyzed (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). I will know that my data collection and need for interview subjects is complete when the interviews do not offer any new insights on the categories or on the relationships between the categories.

Ideally, the interviews will be conducted in person. However, if that is not feasible, I will conduct the semi-structured, in-depth interviews via Skype, phone or email. I expect interviews to last around 30 minutes.

iii. **Questions:** A grounded theory interviewer's questions need to define and to explore processes (Charmaz, 2001). Questions must explore both the

interviewer's topic and fit the participant's experience (Charmaz, 2001).
Questions must be sufficiently general to cover a wide range of experiences as
well as narrow enough to elicit and explore the participant's specific experience
(Charmaz, 2001). I plan to have 5-7 core interview questions that I will ask every
interviewee. I will also have a list of probes that I will use depending on the
answers given. A list of sample questions can be found in Appendix B.

iv. **Limitations:** There are a few cons to conducting individual interviews that must
be addressed. First, my lack of experience as a moderator will be a disadvantage.
It will be difficult for me to develop strong questions, create a comfortable
interview environment and build a good rapport with the interviewees. This may
limit the information I receive. I plan to compensate for my lack of experience
with thorough preparation and practice. Second, individual interviews may not
allow me to reach a large enough sample size. An insufficient sample size may
make it difficult for me reach conclusions that are valuable to this field of
research and to industry.

CHAPTER SEVEN: TARGETS FOR PUBLICATION

After finishing my research I aim to submit my work for publication and
presentation. Some possible targets for publication are the Journal of Integrated
Marketing Communications, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Public
Relations Research, Journal of Public Relations, Journal of Current Issues & Research in
Advertising and the Journal of Marketing Communications. Some possible targets for
presentation are the American Academy of Advertising conference, Association for

Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention and the Integrated

Marketing Summit.

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