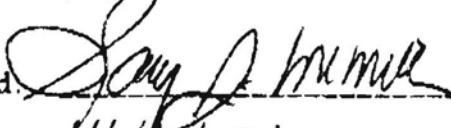


**Appendix D - UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM
SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL**Name: D. Travis RuckerCollege: Communications Department: AdvertisingFaculty Mentor: Dr. Sally J. McMillanPROJECT TITLE: Surviving Campaigns: The First Act of Tracwork

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: , Faculty MentorDate: 4/4/01

Comments (Optional):

Surviving Campaigns

The Fine Art of Teamwork

D. Travis Rucker
May 01, 2001

ABSTRACT

Perhaps the most taxing experience in the academic career of any advertising student is Advertising 470, Advertising Campaigns. In a very short time, students must form a team and develop a real advertising campaign for a real client, from research to final executions.

Traditionally, there has been a mystique surrounding Campaigns. Many ad students regard it as the undergraduate trial by fire. Entire schedules are designed semesters in advance to allow as much "free time" as possible to be devoted to the experience.

Campaigns is just that, an experience. As with any experience, it varies from person to person. For that reason, no amount of writing can prepare a student for what he is about to encounter. It can, however, prepare a student to deal with the issues he will face.

Many of these issues involve the team aspect of Campaigns. Students are not at liberty to choose either their professor/advisor, or their client. They can, however, choose their team. The team a student chooses could have more impact on his experience with Campaigns than any other decision he makes the entire semester.

Choosing a capable team is just the beginning. Leading a team through its beginning and intermediate stages to a point of effectiveness requires an understanding of team dynamics and human resource management. Deciding how a team will divide and accomplish work, establishing leadership, and dealing with difficult team members are all issues that must be dealt with before a team becomes productive.

Despite the deadlines, computer crashes, and sleepless nights, Campaigns can be an enjoyable experience. Surrounding yourself with the right people will certainly help, but the most important thing to remember is that Campaigns is just a class.

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"Advertising Campaigns can be a time-consuming, nerve-wracking, emotionally wrenching experience," (Morrison, p.2). And that's putting it mildly. In fact, you're about to start the shortest, longest, most taxing, most enjoyable semester of your collegiate career. Sound impossible? Take it from someone who's been there, and finished successfully I might add, it will be all of that and more. The more you know up front, though, the saner you'll be at the end. Hopefully, this little guide will answer most of your questions about Campaigns, even the ones you don't know you're supposed to be asking. It's been designed to provide you with practical information about choosing your team, delegating work, keeping a social life, etc.

A Winning Team

Perhaps the most important decision you'll make about your semester in Campaigns is whom you'll spend your time working with. You can't pick your campaign's professor. Unfortunately, you can't even pick your client. What you can pick, however, is your team. I use that term loosely here, because as you'll see in just a few pages, not every group of people working on a common project constitutes a team. Since teams are the only real variable in this three-credit hour competition, you'll want to put yourself at an advantage.

Since teams and team dynamics are so important in this class, the majority of this paper has been devoted to them.

Effective Teams

According to Donald Weiss, an effective team "operates in an environment in which well-trained people can accomplish their goals or objectives without a designated head," (p. 8). So what characterizes that environment? What are some of the earmarks of an effective team? Weiss points to five: a sense of commitment, a high degree of communication, agreement through consensus, a sense of empowerment, and a healthy degree of disagreement and creativity (p. 9). The need for commitment is obvious. It is also explained later in the paper, but the other four characteristics merit some discussion now.

"High communication" is open, direct and honest. Weiss says it goes beyond small talk to "shop talk" (p. 11). Team members shouldn't be afraid to speak honestly about a direction they think the team should take or an option it needs to pursue. High communication isn't beating-around-the-bush or walking on eggshells, but it also isn't disrespectful or closed-minded. This characteristic ties very closely with the fifth one, a healthy degree of

disagreement and creativity. As members speak honestly, divergent views will come out. Rather than be reactive, disagreement among an effective team is provocative. It challenges teams to study the situation and reach a consensus. In reaching a consensus, individual team members feel empowered to make decisions and take action. Resolving a disagreement also neutralizes minor problems before they reach a crisis state (p. 12). That is especially important because small issues left to work themselves out can tear a team apart later (p. 24).

So how can a team encourage high communication? Weiss offers these suggestions: listen actively, be conscious of nonverbals, be candid and accept candor, manage your way of speaking, provide and accept information, be patient with and encourage disagreement, and express and acknowledge your feelings (p. 41-44). He also prescribes a list of maintenance functions he calls "process dynamics." These process dynamics will preserve the effective team atmosphere once you've established it. They are: gatekeeping (opening channels of communication for all opinions), listening, expediting (keeping on task), encouraging, empowering, harmonizing, yielding (giving up an unpopular personal view for the sake of the team), observing, accepting (opposing viewholders), and cheerleading (pp. 35-36).

Are we there yet?

It's safe to say that not every bunch of people constitutes a team, but if it's not a team, then the question remains, what is it. Buckholz and Roth say that a team is only one of three possibilities. Their theory suggests that there are three phases to team development: a Collection of Individuals, a Group, and a Team. A "team" moves through this process as its focus changes (p. 15). A Collection of Individuals is focused on, not surprisingly, the individuals themselves. In this phase, members are forming their group identities. It is similar to Weiss' Introduction and Stage Setting phases (Weiss, p. 21) and Tuckman's Forming stage (Robbins & Finley, p. 225).

Depending on when and how you begin forming your Campaigns team, you may find yourself starting in this phase of team development. If you do, it's important to answer a few key questions: Why are we here? Who are these people I'm working with? What are their strengths? How am I going to find out what they are capable of? (pp. 227-228)

The second phase, Group, is comparable to Weiss' Probing/Testing and early Creating stages and Tuckman's Storming and most of Norming stages. During this phase, we see the development of a group identity. The focus shifts from individuals to a leader of some sort. During this period of team

development working norms, individual roles, and a purpose is established (p. 15). It is estimated that 60% of an average "team's" life is spent in the early parts of these two stages (Robbins & Finley, p.230). That figure alone may be reason enough to form your team before you ever get to Campaigns. Effective teamwork doesn't get done until you reach the final stage, Team. To get there, however, you'll have to answer the questions: What are each of our roles and responsibilities? Who's in charge? What happens when we disagree? How do we make ourselves more accessible? When will we meet? (Robbins & Finley, pp. 231-232)

The Team phase of development is purpose centered. The team is focused, members share responsibilities, and they are able to respond rapidly to change or crisis (p. 15). This phase can be compared to Weiss's Producing and Maintaining stages and Tuckman's Performing stage. This is where you'll want your Campaigns team to be as quickly as possible because this is where the real work gets done. Start early on your team, take the time to learn each other, and implement Weiss' suggestions for maintaining and effective team atmosphere.

When should I pick my team?

Whether you've gotten concrete commitments or not, you should have already been considering who's available. People are surprisingly loyal in their undergraduate years. I remember one classmate who absolutely did not want to work with an old roommate in Campaigns, but because of a conversation that had happened three semesters earlier, she wound up in her group. No one wants to hurt anyone else's feelings. Use that to your advantage. If there is a winner out there, that one guy that's a brilliant creative or that young lady that can present anything to anyone, get them thinking about working with you. If someone else hasn't approached them already, they'll have a lot harder time telling you, "No."

With that in mind, try to have a core group before you leave on break the semester before you're to take Campaigns. There are two reasons for this, really. First, it allows you to work ahead. If you have 3 or 4 definite team members, go ahead and be researching your client over the break. Find out everything you can about them. You're going to have to do it in your situation analysis anyway, why wait until you only have two weeks to do it? If you do, you'll just want to kill each other. That could be detrimental to your new, sensitive team. Second, you don't have the stress of trying to piece

together a team out of the best "left-overs" in the class. You'll be able to enjoy your break a little more knowing you have a competent group of individuals to work with. I'll never forget all of the undue stress and hours of lost sleep a very dear friend of mine put herself through because it was New Year's and she didn't know who her Campaigns partners were going to be.

How many people should I have on my team?

While there may not be a perfect number, six works very well. The workload can be divided easily. No one is ever left with nothing to do. There are fewer people to coordinate schedules with, i.e. fewer time constraints. It's also a lot easier to get seated at a restaurant when you have those oh-so-productive brainstorming sessions over *Sprite* and buffalo wings.

How should I pick my team?

Very carefully. No, seriously, very carefully. Perhaps the two most important attributes to look for in a potential team member are commitment and talent. A good team member needs to have both. The most committed teammates in the world will do you no good if they have no talent, but the

most talented students in the world will only perform at their level of commitment. Commitment, for the purposes of this paper, really refers to the outcome a person desires. Does that person want to win, or just want to pass the class? Believe me, one takes much more time and effort than the other. All team members need to have the same goal in mind. If they do not, the team loses effectiveness as tension builds between those who desire a higher level of performance and those who are just trying to finish the course. In his book, *How to Build and Manage a Winning Project Team*, James Lewis breaks these two attributes down even further, stating that good team recruits should possess the necessary skills, should have a temperament that fits well with the rest of the team, should have their needs met by participating with the group, and should not object to extra work/overtime (p. 44).

Talent also has a slightly different definition for our purposes. It includes not only skills an individual has mastered, but also that individual's personality. Some individual's are natural leaders. Others are more analytical. Still, others are more creative. Those attributes are just as important as being able to write or present. For a successful campaign's

team, the old saying, "It takes all kinds," holds true. You'll need a variety of different skills and personalities if you hope to do well.

There is one skill, however, that every team member needs to possess, the ability to write well. Regardless of what part of the project they work on, all members of your team will have to be able to write about what they did. Because time is so short already, the less time you have to spend on editing and rewriting, the better. That's not to say that there won't be an editor in your group that makes everything flow together and sound like one voice; there should be an editor on every team.

Aside from good writers, you should also be looking for at least four strong presenters. Do not, however, just put together a team of great presenters. Look for fellow students who excel in other areas and present well. You'll need team members who know their way around media. Do you remember where to find the information you'll need to do an outdoor buy? Could you calculate the total GRP's generated by your suggested media plan?

You'll also need someone that feels at home designing and evaluating research instruments. Given the time constraints you'll be faced with, you'll need to be able to get the information you need the first time around. You won't be able to conduct interview after interview or survey after survey.

Your resident research "expert" may have to be fairly creative in finding ways to obtain information from your target market.

Depending on your client and the objective you've been given, you may need other "specialists" on your team. Because of the shift toward more integrated marketing plans and the increase in globalization, team members who are knowledgeable in public relations and global marketing may soon be a necessary part of any team that hopes to win the Campaigns competition. These were essential components in our campaign. Unfortunately, no one on our team had ever taken a public relations course. Things would have been a lot easier if someone had.

Despite all of your incredible media buys and your innovative promotions, it is creative that generally sets one campaign apart from all of the others. This is especially true if you go on to compete at the district level. With that said, find a couple of good creative minds. The key word there is "couple." The small amount of time given to the creative executions in your Campaigns semester will send a lone creative into fits. "But he has all semester to work on creative," you say. The reality is that your team has all semester to change its mind about strategies and the direction of the campaign, but once the creative is done, you can't change even the smallest

idea and not somehow affect the creative. In other words, the actual executions are the very last things to be done, and they have to be done rather quickly. If you have two creatives who are on the same page, you'll turn out a much better product than if you had one who was just trying to get things finished on time. It's also beneficial for your creatives to have someone else around to bounce ideas off of. Creative minds feed off of each other. That's why most agencies establish writer/art director teams.

Most likely, one of your creatives, if not both, will have a good working knowledge of image files. If not, make sure you have someone in your group that knows how to take a PageMaker file and insert it into Word without compromising the quality of your image. (It's about a six-step process that requires some familiarity with Photoshop.)

Is it really that bad for friends to work together?

It can be. There were more than just a couple of friends that I have talked to in our Campaigns class that admitted that the stress of the competition was trying their friendships. One young lady even went as far as to say that she was glad her team didn't go on to district competition because it put her at odds with a close friend in her group.

One instance in which friends did work well together in Campaigns occurred within our team. One of my team members and I were friends prior to Campaigns; however, we had become friends while working together on group projects during a previous semester. We had already seen each other at our worst. Be forewarned, you will see the worst in some of your teammates. Be that as it may, and this may sound cheesy, but if the chemistry in your team is right, by the end of the competition you'll have a handful of new friends that you're working with, anyway. My teammates know more about the last three months of my life than my own fiancée.

How should our team work?

That decision is one that will have to be made based upon the personalities within your group. For our team, breaking up into "departments" to do the work and then meeting as an entire group to discuss ideas and catch everyone up on what was going on within our smaller departments was ideal. These meetings were generally short, so they increased the likelihood that most of our team members could be there. Keep in mind that most everyone in your group will have other classes, a job, and a significant other. All of these things require some time and, consequently, create some scheduling

conflicts. In other words, everyone in your group can't meet all of the time. That isn't a problem in a departmentalized group. As long as a representative of each department is at the meeting, the entire team keeps moving forward. That communication between departments should not be taken lightly. If the media department, for example, forgets to tell the creative department that they are now buying half page newspaper ads instead of full-page ads, the creative department never knows to adapt the layout of the ads they've already designed. That is the type of mistake you will catch as you're putting your book together, but that is not the time to have to try to fix it. You'll have enough to do then, without the last minute corrections.

While the departmental approach worked for our team, other teams had other ways of working together. Some did exactly that; they worked together. Every time you walked into the computer lab, you would find all 6 or 8 of them huddled around a computer, sometimes two, hashing out word after word, comma after comma. While everyone in that group may have known what was going on every step of the way, our team would have strangled one another.

How often should our team meet?

How often do you have to meet? Our group communicated somehow on pretty much a daily basis. Thanks to the marvels of modern technology, the real work could be done anytime, anywhere and mailed to the editor. When we actually met face-to-face, it was really just to catch up or discuss an issue with the entire group that a department needed a decision on. If you're in one of those groups that does everything as an entire team, you'll need to meet more frequently just to get things done.

What if we aren't getting along?

In every group, there will be a diverse selection of personalities, interests, etc. Along with that diversity comes the guarantee that there will be some disagreements. Whether it's a frustrated achiever who can't get the overly social group to get any work done, or the dawdler who wastes everyone's time piddling on a small part of the project, a clash of some sort will occur. Some people are just difficult to work with.

Muriel Solomon identifies 10 broad categories of difficult people and countless personalities within each category in his book *Working With Difficult People*. Though his research deals with corporate America, many of

these same difficult people could be found in your Campaigns group. The harsh reality is, you may very well be one, so before you point the finger at someone who is disrupting your team, see if you might be contributing to the problem.

Are you a pushy/presumptuous person? Do you find yourself obstructing other people's ideas to advance your own? Have you ever been part of a "power play" within your team? Maybe you can be a real clod, someone who is just insensitive and inconsiderate. Perhaps you're a slipshod, careless in what you do, forcing your team to go behind you and correct your work. Are you an over-committer, taking on more responsibilities than you'll actually have time to finish? Have you become the wet blanket of the team, refusing to see the glass as anything but half-empty? Maybe you're the martyr, sacrificing for your group hoping for some loyalty for your "selflessness?" (pp. v - xiii)

If you find that you are contributing to the problems in your group, there is an easy solution, stop. What if it is another member of your group, though? According to Robbins & Finley, "personality incompatibilities" can be resolved with a little bit of empathy and attention (p. 63). In other words, don't just ignore the problem and let everyone in your team work in an

atmosphere of irritation. Conversely, don't attack the individual. Recognize that there may be a reason for the difficult attitude and treat the reason if possible.

Will UT give me an 'A' if one of my team members "mysteriously" dies?

No. (I think the real question here is, "How do you define mysteriously?") If you do have a team member worthy of death, there is a legal way to deal with that person. In fact, this option may exact a fate worse than death. Should you and the rest of your team decide that a team member is dragging you down, you may decide to "fire" that person. Firing a team member fails them for that semester, forcing them to either change majors or repeat Campaigns the following semester.

How do we handle the competition?

Crush them mercilessly. That seems to be the mentality, anyway. It's almost comical to see the measures that teams will resort to in order to protect their ideas from the competition. That doesn't mean it's a bad thing, though. Teams do get cut throat. Our team adopted the policy that we wouldn't throw anything away in a University building or public place like

Kinko's, where another team might find it. You'll be amazed at the lengths some people will go to just to catch a glimpse of what you're doing.

Just remember to act professionally toward your competition. There was one other team that my own team absolutely hated. We didn't care if we lost as long as they didn't win. The reason wasn't because of anyone on the team, it was their "we won before the competition even started so we're going to talk down to everyone else and lie about our grades" attitude. I don't think anyone had any professional respect for any member of that group by the end of the semester. Remember, even though it is a competition, it's just a school competition. You may have to work with some of these competitors in the real world one day.

How do we make it up to that significant other?

Flowers. There is no way that you can make up for the time that you'll have to spend with your group or sitting in front of a virus infested UT computer, but make the effort to show that special person in your life that you haven't forgotten. Think of Campaigns as a true measure of your relationship. If you're still together at the end of it, you've got something that could last.

How do we put our book together?

Heed the advice that we didn't take, put it all together as you go. Our most trying hour as a group came after an all night session of trying to put all of the various sections of our book together and make it conform to the layout we had designed. In the wee hours of the morning, after battling computer viruses and countless glitches, one of our team members stormed out of the library with hurt feelings, threatening to leave a key portion of the project to the rest of us. Save yourself a headache and format your book as you go.

Where do we get everything printed?

I can't believe I'm saying this, but Kinko's is probably the most convenient place. At no time should you use the one on the Strip, but the one in the Gallery on Kingston Pike is OK. Make sure you're there to oversee what they are doing, though. Our first set of books was bound along the wrong edge. Alpha Graphics does one of the best, most professional looking jobs in Knoxville, but it is expensive and, depending on the size of your print job, they contract jobs out to other printers, so you can't get everything printed in just a few hours. Another alternative is High Resolutions in the Old City.

They do a very good job for a fairly reasonable price, but they are not a 24/7 shop like Kinko's.

Final Thoughts

As I said before, your semester in Campaigns will be a lot of different things. Your biggest challenge will be adjusting to all of them. So, whether you're throwing back a *Sprite* with your team, or trying to reclaim that lost file at 3:00 am, have fun with it. Enjoy getting to know the people you've surrounded yourself with. Remember, though it demands a lot of time and effort, Campaigns is just a class.

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