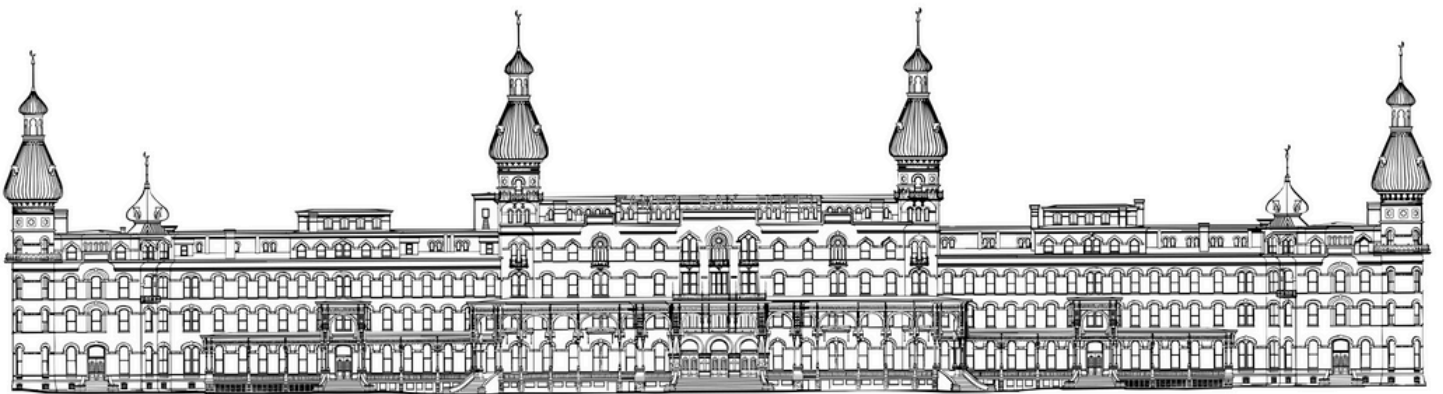


Awareness and Engagement in Generational Audience Segments for the University of Tampa's MASEM Program Social Media

RESEARCH REPORT



The University Of

T A M P A[®]

Executive Summary

Overview

The Social Media Superstars conducted a research consultation to address the visibility and engagement challenges faced by the University of Tampa's Master of Arts in Social and Emerging Media (MASEM) program. This project aimed to understand generational preferences, evaluate content effectiveness, and formulate actionable strategies to enhance MASEM's social media impact.

Research Objectives, Questions, and Goals

The primary objective of this research was to determine how MASEM can improve social media engagement and awareness across generational audience segments, specifically Generation Z and Millennials. The central research questions explored which platforms and content types most effectively increase interaction and engagement rates within the target audience. The overarching goal was to equip MASEM with data-driven strategies to enhance its digital presence, foster engagement, and position itself as a leader in emerging media education.

Research Methods and Samples

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating a Qualtrics survey and eye-tracking interviews. The Qualtrics survey sampled 58 participants, predominantly from Generation Z (90.57%), with additional representation from Millennials (7.55%) and Generation X (1.89%). Most respondents were undergraduate students (75.93%), with a smaller proportion comprising graduate students, faculty, and others. Eye-tracking interviews included three participants: two Gen Z students and one Gen X professor affiliated with the University of Tampa, focusing on careers in creative fields such as marketing, advertising, and design. These methods provided comprehensive insights into generational preferences and content engagement behaviors.

Key Findings

Qualtrics Survey Insights

1. **Platform Trust:** Instagram (53.7%) and LinkedIn (24.07%) were the most trusted platforms for university-related messaging.
2. **Engagement Formats:** Respondents preferred interactive features, with polls (43.14%) and carousel posts (19.61%) driving the most engagement.
3. **Content Preferences:** Trends such as "A Day in the Life" videos (41.67%), testimonials (29.17%), and educational content (14.58%) resonated most with audiences.

Eye Tracking Interview Insights

1. **Visual Attention:** Bold colors (red and black), graphics, and large text effectively captured attention, while photographs elicited emotional engagement and longer viewing durations.
2. **Bio and Highlight Sections:** Participants consistently focused on Instagram bio information and highlights, emphasizing their importance in creating impactful first impressions.
3. **Post Engagement:** Posts blending graphics and photographs promoted smoother eye movement and higher engagement.

Executive Summary

Challenges

MASEM's strengths include an established social media presence and compelling content. However, the program faces challenges such as limited resources for dedicated social media management and low alumni engagement. These barriers hinder the program's ability to fully capitalize on its digital potential.

Recommendations

Platform Specific Strategies

1. **Instagram:** Prioritize relatable student experiences, testimonials, and trending themes like "Get Ready With Me" (GRWM).
2. **LinkedIn:** Feature alumni/ faculty success stories and event promotions for maximum engagement.

Content Design

1. Alternate between infographics and photographs to balance visual appeal with emotional resonance.
2. Use bold colors strategically to emphasize key information without overwhelming viewers.

Optimizing Visuals

1. Enhance the Instagram bio and highlight sections for maximum engagement and accessibility by providing information and a link-tree.
2. Showcase key moments, such as student achievements, graduations, and community-building events, to attract and engage prospective students.

Conclusion

By aligning its strategies with generational expectations and leveraging these insights, MASEM can solidify its position as a leader in emerging media education. Implementing these recommendations will expand its digital reach, foster deeper engagement, and strengthen its connection with diverse audience segments.

Research Problem

Over the course of the semester, the firm was tasked with answering the following question: How can UTampa MASEM improve social media engagement and awareness amongst Gen Z and Millennials?

By conducting research, we aimed to assess how The University of Tampa's MASEM program can improve its social media engagement and awareness amongst different audience. In our research, we decided to separate audience groups by generation (Generation Z, Millennials, and Generation X). The University of Tampa's MASEM program hopes to reach several different age ranges and backgrounds with their social media presence. In order to better reach and cater the social media presence to different generations, research needed to be conducted on what kind of content each generation is more likely to enjoy and engage with. Each generation has experienced in a different way due to the timing of technological advances, and that contributes to the differences in what kind of content people trust and prefer.

As social media and user-generated content continue to expand, more people are using social media as a research tool for decision making and university evaluation (Keystone Education Group). This means it is key for MASEM to have an effective page in order for the program to see growth and attendance from students that did undergraduate school at a different university (WSU). With an engaging social media presence, MASEM can reach and impact people from outside the University of Tampa community.

Research Objectives

1. Determine what kind of content engages Generation Z users.

Users that belong to Generation Z were born any time from 1997 to 2012. Those in this generation are ranging from ages 12-27 currently and are considered the most tech savvy generation because they are the first generation to grow up with technology as an integral part of their daily life. Due to the nature of technology's role in Gen Z's upbringing, the kind of content they prefer or trust may differ from older generations. By conducting research, we aimed to assess what kind of content Gen Z prefers so that MASEM can effectively reach this audience segment.

2. Determine what kind of content engages Millennial users.

Users that belong to the Millennial generation were born any time from 1981 to 1996. Those in this generation are ranging from ages 28-43 currently. While millennials did not grow up with technology as an integral part of their daily life as early on as Gen Z, they still experienced the rapid development of technological advancements as they reached high school. Most millennials did not see the beginning of the internet or computers like Generation X did. By conducting research, we aimed to assess what kind of content Millennials prefer so that MASEM can effectively reach this audience segment.

Research Objectives

3. Determine what kind of content is shared or reposted more by both Generation Z users and Millennial users.

In almost all social media algorithms, the posts that are shared, reposted, and engaged with the most frequently are pushed to the feeds of other users. One of the most effective ways for MASEM to reach people outside of the University of Tampa community on social media is by landing on the feeds of users who do not already follow the program's pages. By creating posts that encourage users to engage with the post through commenting, sharing, or reposting, MASEM can expand its follower base and hopefully capture the interest of those looking for graduate school programs that did not complete their undergraduate degree at the University of Tampa. By conducting research, we aimed to determine what kind of posts capture the attention of the different generational audience segments and what kind of posts each generation would be more likely to engage with.

Research Questions

What **platforms and channels** do MASEM's target audience consistently utilize?

What form of social content interests MASEM's target audience, **increasing interaction and click-through rates**?

What types of social media content has MASEM's target audience **consistently engaged with**?

Research Justification

Strategic Visibility

MASEM must understand the platforms and channels where its target audience is most active. To increase interaction and engagement, its advertisements and promotions must be visible to this audience. By ensuring the correct choice of platform and channels based on context, time of day, and content target audience segment, MASEM ensures its social media presence will have successful visibility, allowing it to showcase its content to the largest audience possible. Due to MASEM's diverse target audience, they must also strategically utilize various platforms to interest different audience members, such as Tampa Bay professionals and young professionals (Nguyen, 2024).

Interest Leads to Engagement

MASEM must consider the diverse content and visual aesthetics that appeal to its target audience, encouraging them to interact and engage with the brand's social media accounts. This involves understanding which social media strategies capture their audience's interest, such as stories, traditional posts, reels, and polls. Furthermore, the engagement preferences of the program's multi-generational audience may differ, making it essential to gain a deeper understanding of this target group for comprehensive audience engagement (Holt, 2016). By segmenting their target audience and analyzing the characteristics of each category, MASEM can effectively promote engagement with their entire audience.

Engaging Content fits into the Audience's Lives Seemlessly

Audience members are more likely to engage with MASEM's social content when presented in a format and context that aligns with their habits and preferences. Researching these trends in behavior on social media will help MASEM strategically determine how to post and promote content. By understanding these preferences, MASEM can create compelling content tailored to their audience's lifestyles, making engagement worthwhile and effortless. With this understanding, MASEM may produce engaging content that fits into their target audience's lives, making engagement worthwhile and easy for viewers.

Conceptual Definitions

These conceptual definitions will guide how MASEM can make sense of their empirical findings.

MASEM- Masters of Social and Emerging Media that is a program offered at the University of Tampa to help current students in the program succeed in future careers in digital/social media and marketing.

Gen z/ Millennial- Gen Z typically includes individuals born from 1997 to 2012, making them approximately 12 to 27 years old in 2024. Millennials, born from 1981 to 1996, are about 28 to 43 years old in 2024.

Digital and emerging social media- encompass online platforms and tools that enable interactive, visual, and community-focused communication, evolving constantly with new technologies and user behaviors.

Target Audience platform preferences- Target audience platform preferences reflect the specific social media and digital channels favored by particular demographic groups based on factors like content type, interactivity, and community values, guiding brands on where to engage most effectively.

Platform/channels- Platforms or channels are the digital spaces and mediums, like social media sites, websites, and apps, where content is shared and audiences connect and engage with brands or each other.

Secondary research insights

These secondary insights will support future research activities MASEM decides to conduct and were based off of existing research and conducting a social media audit.

Gen Z and Millennials primarily rely on Instagram, X, and LinkedIn as their main social media platforms. The MASEM program should strategically use these platforms to highlight its focus on digital media and enhance its engagement. Instagram Reels and Stories provide opportunities to highlight student projects, behind-the-scenes glimpses, and live Q&A sessions, fostering an interactive and authentic connection with prospective students. The X platform can be utilized for alumni takeovers, where alumni share their experiences, provide tips, and engage the audience through polls. LinkedIn is an effective platform to showcase alumni success by featuring their career paths, specific skills acquired through the program, and their professional achievements, complemented with graphics or videos and tagging alumni and their employers to expand reach and visibility.

The program can further emphasize its value by showcasing real-world projects and outcomes that demonstrate the tangible benefits of a MASEM education. Highlighting graduates who are excelling in social strategy, digital media, and marketing careers reinforces the program's relevance and impact. Collaborations with other programs and alumni can broaden connections and foster increased engagement. Messaging should also highlight the program's commitment to critical issues such as media ethics, sustainability, and diversity, emphasizing ethical social media practices and reflecting values that resonate with the target audience.

Staying attuned to trends and memes can make the program's content relatable and engaging. Incorporating social media challenges, digital media trends, branding insights, and memes can capture the attention of the target audience. Additionally, the program should deliver educational content in digestible formats, such as quick tips on social media strategies, advice on content creation, and highlights of academic strengths, to establish itself as a thought leader in the field of social and emerging media.

Survey and Interview Sample Detail

Qualtrics Survey Sample

58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

The survey sample consisted of over 50 participants affiliated with the University of Tampa (UTampa), primarily from Generation Z, with additional representation from Millennials, Generation X, and Boomers. Participants were recruited using a combination of volunteer sampling, judgmental sampling, and snowball sampling methods. Volunteer sampling allowed individuals to self-select into the study, judgmental sampling was used to ensure diverse generational representation, and snowball sampling helped expand the participant pool through referrals.

Interview (Eye Tracking) Sample

3 Participants | Eye Tracking | Gen Z | Gen X | University of Tampa Students | Professor

The interview sample consisted of three participants affiliated with the University of Tampa's College of Arts and Letters. This group included two Gen Z students and one Gen X professor, all of whom have a strong focus on careers in creative fields, particularly marketing, advertising, design, and creative direction. The interviews, which incorporated both traditional questions and eye-tracking tasks, aimed to explore the participants' reactions and preferences regarding social media content. These participants were chosen due to their interest in creative fields and their association with the University of Tampa.

Qualtrics Survey

Survey Sample: 58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

Figure 1 and 2 are the results of the survey as it relates to demographic. Figure 1 is the results of the question, “Which generation are you a part of?” 90.57% were Gen Z, 7.55% were Millennials and 1.89% were Gen X. Figure 2 is the results of the question, “What is your status at the University of Tampa?” 75.93% were undergraduate students, 3.70% were graduate students and faculty, and 16.67% were “other” (relatives of students, student at another university). These results were relevant to the survey as we wanted to learn how different generations and their affiliation with UTampa affected their outlook of MASEM.

Figure 1

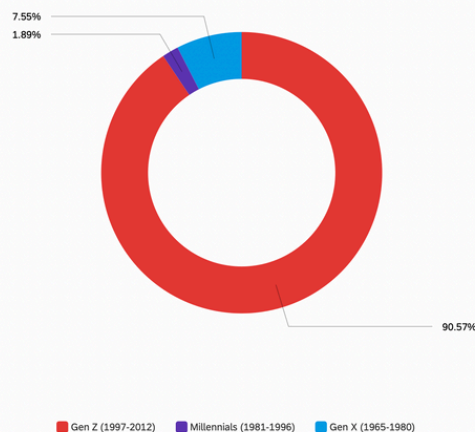
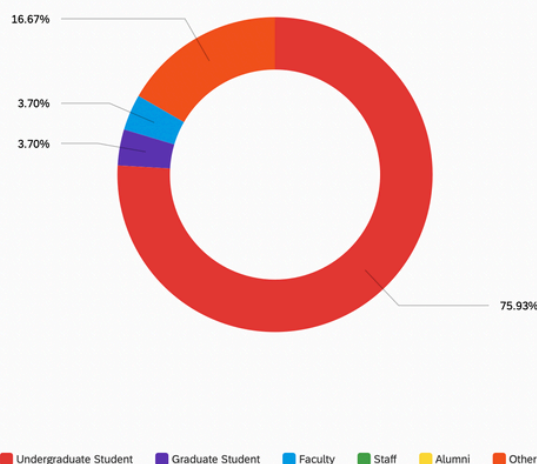


Figure 2



Qualtrics Survey

Survey Sample: 58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

Figure 3 and 4 are the results of the survey as it relates to social media usage and expectations. Figure 1 is the results of the question, “Which social media platform do you trust the most as it relates to university related messaging?” 53.70% chose Instagram, 24.07% chose LinkedIn, 11.11% chose “other” (Facebook, none) 9.36% chose Snapchat and 1.85% chose TikTok. Based on this data, MASEM could benefit from making Instagram their most engaging platform. Figure 2 is the results of the question, “What prompts you to engage with UTampa related social media content the most? ” 43.14% chose polls, 19.61% chose carousel posts, 17.65% chose highlights, 15.69% chose reels with questions and 3.92% chose “other” (they don’t engage). Due to Figure 1’s results, using polls on Instagram would increase engagement.

Figure 3

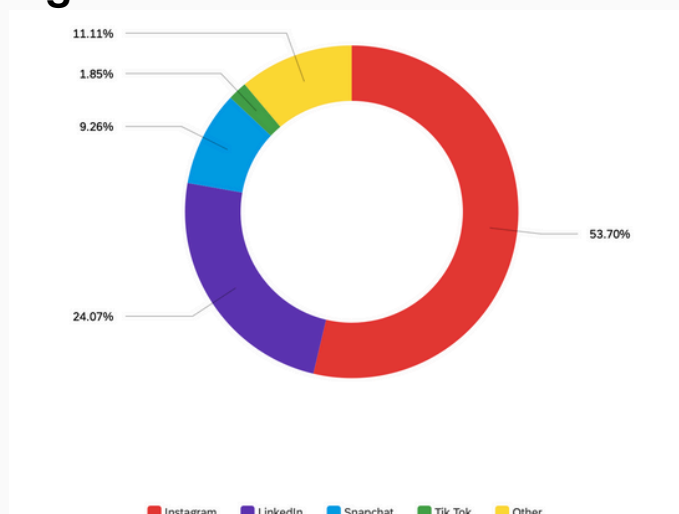
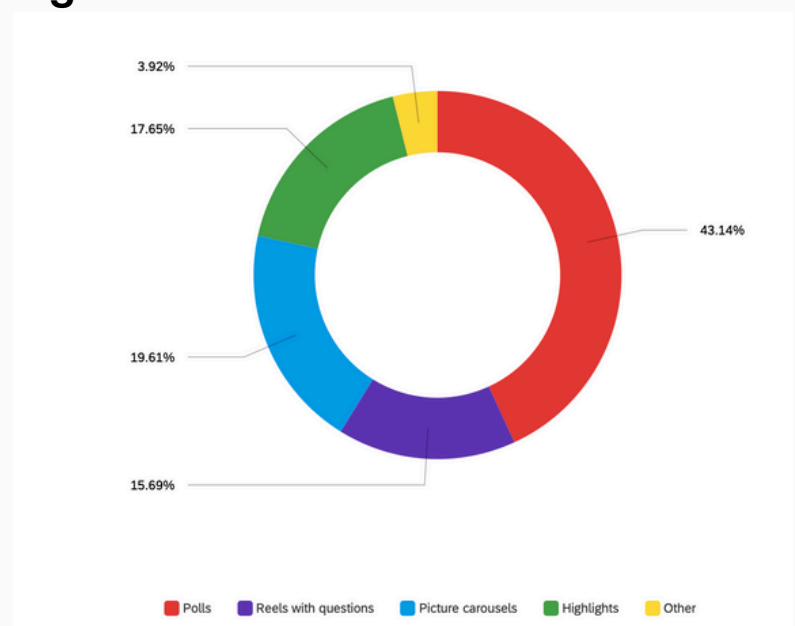


Figure 4



Qualtrics Survey

Survey Sample: 58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

Figure 5 and 6 are the results of the survey as it relates to messaging content strategies. Figure 5 is the results of the question, “What type of content strategies do you expect to see on university related social media pages?” 39.22% chose purpose driven messages, 37.35% chose educational content, 19.61% chose entertainment and 3.92% chose “other” (university impact, research findings, persuasive imagery). Based on this data, MASEM could benefit from sharing their beliefs and values. Figure 2 is the results of the question, “What type of content are you interested in seeing from a UTampa graduate program’s Instagram?” 41.67% chose trends (a day in the life), 29.17% chose testimonials (students, faculty), 14.58% chose educational (course descriptions) 10.42% chose special events and 4.17% chose “other” (doesn’t use social media). Due to Figure 6's results, keeping up with trends will boost engagement.

Figure 5

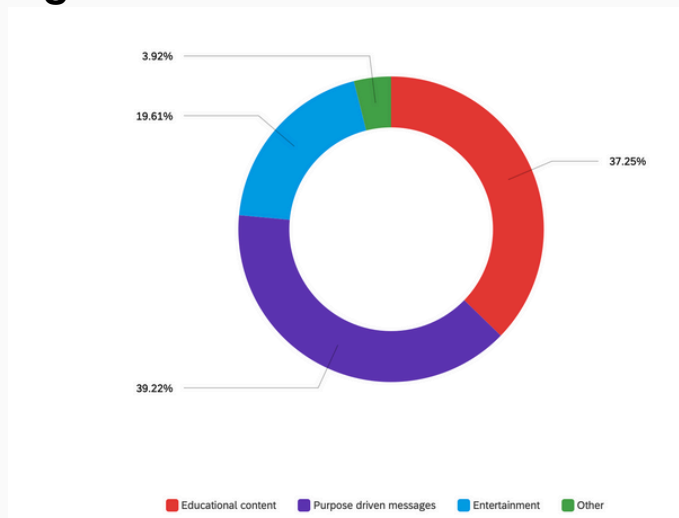
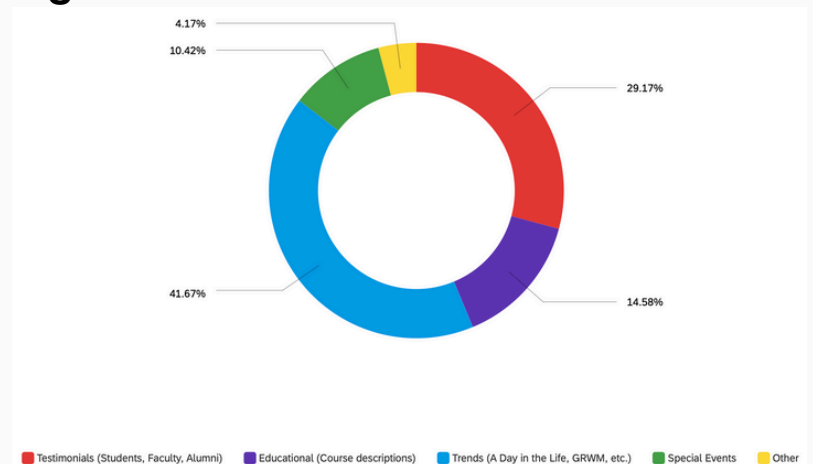


Figure 6



Qualtrics Survey

Survey Sample: 58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

Figure 7 and 8 are the results of the survey as it relates to what motivates respondents to engage with posts. Figure 7 is the results of the question, “Name one thing that makes you more likely to comment on a UTampa post.” Responses included: a friend or classmate was featured, there was a giveaway, or a question was asked. Figure 8 is the results of the question, “Name one thing that makes you more likely to share a UTampa post.” Responses included: post was informational or funny, post featured a friend, or there was a giveaway. Based on these results, MASEM could continue to post students and their achievements, and also use create methods such as trivia questions or giveaways to increase sharing and engagement.

Figure 7



Figure 8



Qualtrics Survey

Crosstabs IQ

Survey Sample: 58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

We used Crosstabs iQ, a tool in Qualtrics to cross reference the generations demographic with key questions. In the survey results, we learned that Gen Z is using social media the most as it relates to looking for university related messaging and we can conclude that MASEM should be targeting them the most. The crosstabs results will reflect Gen Z's preferences.

First crosstab (Figure 9) crossed “Which generation are you a part of?” and “Do you use social media when looking for information about a university or degree program?” 58.5% of Gen Z, 100% of Millennials and 50% of Gen X said Yes. This data shows that social media is a vital aspect of person's important decision making across generations.

Figure 9

Stub: Q13: Do you use social media when looking for information about a university or degree program?

	Q1: Whi...art of?			
	Total	Gen Z (1997-2012)	Millennial...1981-1996)	Gen X (1965-1980)
Yes	58.5%	58.3%	100.0%	50.0%
No	39.6%	39.6%	0.0%	50.0%

Second crosstab (Figure 10) crossed “Which generation are you a part of?” and “What type of content are you interested in seeing from a UTampa graduate program's Instagram?” 39.6% of Gen Z chose trends (a day in the life, GRWM, etc.) and 100% of Millennials chose educational (course descriptions). Looking at it from the perspective of targeting Gen Z, this comparison shows that older generations are more interested in information heavy posts while Gen Z is more interested in creative ways to get messages across. MASEM could benefit from not only participating in trends, but incorporating important information about the program into those trends.

Figure 10

Stub: Q18: What type of content are you interested in seeing from a UTampa graduate program's Instagram? - Selected Choice

	Q1: Whi...art of?			
	Total	Gen Z (1997-2012)	Millennial...1981-1996)	Gen X (1965-1980)
Testimonials (Students, Faculty, Alumni)	26.4%	29.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Educational (Course descriptions)	13.2%	10.4%	100.0%	25.0%
Trends (A Day in the Life, GRWM, etc.)	37.7%	39.6%	0.0%	25.0%
Special Events	9.4%	8.3%	0.0%	25.0%
Other	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%

Qualtrics Survey

Crosstabs IQ

Survey Sample: 58 Participants | Gen Z | Millennials | Gen X | Boomer Generation

Third crosstab (Figure 11) crossed “Which generation are you a part of?” and “What type of content strategies do you expect to see on university related social media pages?” 37.5% of Gen Z chose purpose driven messages and 100% of Millennials chose educational content. Once again, there is a consistent theme of preferring information for Millennials. However, from this data we can see that majority of Gen Z cares about whether or not they align with what the university or program stands for more than anything else.

Stub: Q14: What type of content strategies do you expect to see on university-related social media pages? - Selected Choice

	Q1: Which generation are you a part of?			
	Total	Gen Z (1997-2012)	Millennial...1981-1996)	Gen X (1965-1980)
Educational content	35.8%	33.3%	100.0%	50.0%
Purpose driven messages	37.7%	37.5%	0.0%	50.0%
Entertainment	18.9%	20.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	1.9%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Eye Tracking

Visual appeal and the ability to grab attention are key for success on social media.

We used eye tracking technology to compare and assess social media deliverables and answer two key questions :

1. What kind of visual catches a viewer's eye first?
2. What kind of visual holds a viewer's attention?

The study was conducted with three participants, each one with a different relation to the MASEM program. Unfortunately, we were unable to recruit a participant that was of Millennial age, so two of the participants were from Generation Z and one was from Generation X. The two Gen Z participants are current students at the University of Tampa, and the participant from Gen X is a current professor in the College of Arts and Letters at the University of Tampa. During the study, we showed each individual six visuals and asked a brief question after. The eye tracking interviews were not conducted at the same time and participants were not in the same room at the same time.

The following pages contain all six visuals, as well as the key results found from testing. Areas of Interest were assigned to different spots in each visual to assess the eye movement and fixation of each viewer in different areas of the visual. The results of where participants looked the most and for the longest will be shown via heatmap graphics created by the software that was used for the eye tracking interviews.

Eye Tracking

Visual 1



Visual 1 contains three posts directly from the MASEM program's Instagram feed. Each post features a headline and body text, with the UTampa MASEM logo in different corners. Through eye tracking, we aimed to assess if the logo placement made any difference in the viewer's interest towards the post.

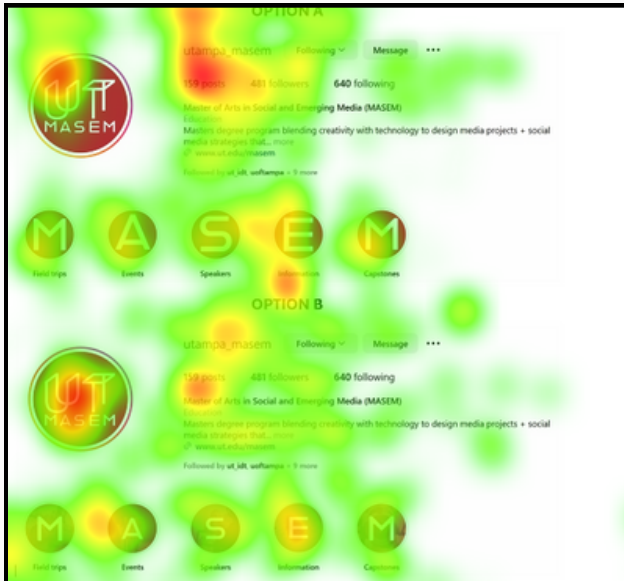
According to the data, post 1 was looked at for the longest amount of time on average. post 1 was also revisited the most and had the highest fixation count.

Despite post 1 having the highest dwell time, highest fixation count, and the most amount of revisits, post 3 has the most concentrated area of color on the heatmap. This means that when the participants looked at post 3, that was the area that was looked at the most and the longest on average. By looking at the heat map, it appears as though the participants paid more attention to the body text of the posts when the typeface size was larger.

Furthermore, the participants paid little to no attention to the logo in the corner of each post. After seeing the visual, the participants were asked if the "Did the logo in the corner of these images affect your interest in the post?" 100% of participants said no.

Eye Tracking

Visual 2



The top image (Option A) in Visual 2 is an image of the MASEM program's current Instagram bio. The bottom image (Option B) is the same bio, but with the highlight pictures changed. The current highlight pictures are a large letter on a red background. The altered highlight pictures feature the letter in a smaller size, on top of an image that relates to the highlight topic. The image has a red tint to it to keep a similar visual flow to the current bio.

Overall, the highest concentration of color on the heatmap is seen on the bio pictures and bio information from both images. The bio information areas (this refers to the area to the right of the bio picture that contains the information about the Instagram account) had the highest dwell time and fixation counts. An important takeaway for MASEM from this visual is that it shows that people actually do pay attention to the bio information.

While the highlight pictures in Option B had a slightly higher concentration on average than the highlight pictures in Option A, the difference was not major. After seeing the visual, the participants were asked "Which bio page was more visually appealing, A or B?" 33% of participants said that they preferred Option A and 66% of participants said that they preferred Option B.

Eye Tracking

Visual 3



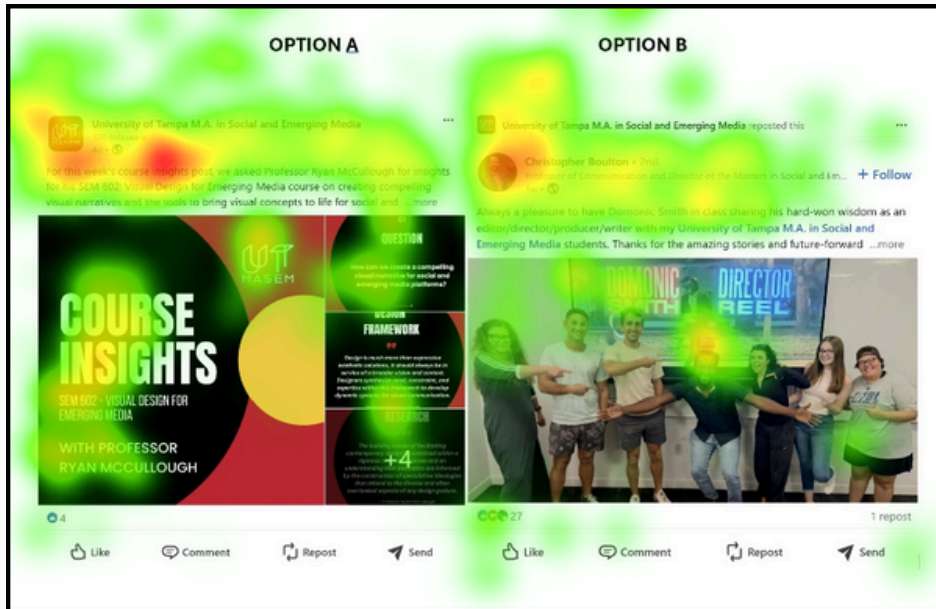
Visual 3 shows the a screenshot of the MASEM program's Instagram feed from November 13th, 2024. Through eye tracking, we aimed to assess how a viewer's eye moved through the feed and what posts seem to catch the most attention. By looking at the heatmap, it appears that the right and left columns of the feed got more attention than the middle column.

The area of highest concentration on the heatmap was the bottom left corner of the feed that features a picture of a professor and two graduates all smiling in their caps and gowns. The next highest color concentration on the heatmap seems to be posts that were very visually different from the post beside it. A good example of this is the middle post in the left column, that is a photograph surrounded by infographics.

The four posts in the top right corner of the feed were blocked together and an area of interest. This area was looked at first by the participants but showed up very little on the heat map. After seeing the visuals, the participants were asked "What caught your attention from the feed you just saw?" One participant said "the red and black logos", another said "how the top half of the feed has a lot of color", and the third participant said "the photos of people smiling and gathering together". An important finding for MASEM from this visual is that viewers seem to be drawn to photographs that evoke emotion.

Eye Tracking

Visual 4



Visual 4 shows two posts from the MASEM program's LinkedIn page. Option A features a post with infographics. Option B features a post with a photograph. With the eye tracking, we aimed to assess what kind of posts people might prefer when in LinkedIn formatting.

Option A had a higher dwell time on average than Option B. Option A also had more concentrated areas on the heatmap than Option B. Option A was also looked at first on average by the participants, was revisited more, and had a higher fixation count than Option B. According to the heatmap, it also appears as though participants read the post caption of Option A more than they did for Option B.

After seeing the visual, the participants were asked "Which post would you be more likely to engage with, A or B?" 33% of the participants answered Option A, and 66% of the participants answered Option B. After answering this question, one of the participants noted that they like seeing people more than infographics on LinkedIn and that is why they chose Option B. A key finding from these results, is that though some people may prefer to see photographs on social media, infographics tend to catch a viewer's attention more and hold their attention for a longer period of time.

Eye Tracking

Visual 5



Visual 5 shows an infographic that was posted to the MASEM program’s Instagram page on April 4, 2023. By the use of eye tracking, we aimed to assess what parts of the infographic captures a viewer’s attention more, and also assess if participants would be likely to engage with the post.

The title of the post that reads “Step Up Your Social Media Game” had a less intense concentration of color than the phone graphic beside it. Something important to consider, however, is that the phone is a smaller area than the title is. Smaller areas can sometimes achieve deep color concentrations on heat maps at an easier rate than larger areas. The title had the highest dwell time and fixation count. The title was also the first area that participants looked at on average.

After seeing the visual, the participants were asked “Would you be likely to scroll to the next picture in the post you just saw?” 66% of the participants answered yes, and 33% of the participants answered no. From the results of this visual, it appears that large text paired with an appealing graphic can be effective at getting a viewer’s attention.

Eye Tracking

Visual 6



Visual 6 features two infographic posts. The post on the left (Option A) is a real post from the MASEM program's Instagram page that was posted on November 1, 2024. The post on the right (Option B) is the same post, but with a graphic of a spartan.

The heaviest color concentration from the heatmap was on the spartan graphic. It appears likely that all of the participants' gazes were drawn to the spartan graphic. Option B had a higher dwell time and fixation count than Option A. However, Option A was revisited more on average, looked at first, and held the participants gaze the longest upon first fixation.

After seeing the visual, the participants were asked "Which post attracted you the most?" 66% of the participants answered Option A, and 33% of the participants answered Option B. It is key to note that while the majority of the participants preferred the post without the spartan graphic, it was effective at capturing their attention.

Eye Tracking Insights

1. Put **graphics or text over photographs** in posts for impact and attention.

After conducting the eye tracking interviews, it appears that people prefer to see photographs even though graphics are more effective at grabbing attention. A good way to appease both needs is to include some graphics or text with photographs. Examples of this are featured later in the report under “Deliverables”.

2. Alternate or **mix infographics and photographs when posting** so that the feed encourages more smooth eye movement.

By alternating, each post is more likely to stand out while also providing a smoother flow for the eye to follow when glancing at the feed.

3. Use the color scheme **strategically**.

Red and black are bold both colors that seem to be effective at grabbing a viewer’s attention. By using the color strategically, MASEM can make sure that the feed is not too overwhelming and also establish importance to certain posts.

4. Post **photographs of key moments** that students or other people might want to **envision themselves in**.

Participants seemed attracted to posts that romanticized the key moments that make MASEM such a great program to be a part of.

Recommendations

To strengthen the University of Tampa's Master of Arts in Social and Emerging Media (MASEM) program's presence on social media platforms, **targeted strategies for LinkedIn and Instagram have been developed.** These recommendations aim to increase **engagement, raise awareness, and position the program as a leader in emerging media education.**

LinkedIn is an ideal platform for connecting with professionals, alumni, and prospective students seeking advanced education in social and emerging media.

The following strategies will enhance MASEM's presence:

Showcase alumni success stories by highlighting career achievements of alumni through interviews or written features, emphasizing how the MASEM program contributed to their success, and utilizing hashtags such as **#EmergingTrends** and **#UTampaMASEM** to increase visibility.

Share industry-relevant content by posting **thought-leadership** articles authored by faculty or students on trending topics like influencer marketing, interactive content, and branding strategies, and sharing external articles and studies related to emerging media to reinforce the program's position as a knowledge leader.

Create interactive content by using LinkedIn's features to post polls or quizzes about social media trends and encouraging discussions by posing questions related to industry developments. Promote networking opportunities by **publicizing events such as webinars, workshops, or conferences** hosted by the MASEM program and developing a LinkedIn Group for MASEM students, alumni, and faculty to facilitate networking and resource sharing.

Optimize for searchability by incorporating **keywords like Social Media Management and Emerging Media Trends** in posts and the program's LinkedIn profile and regularly updating the profile with testimonials, program highlights, and relevant updates.

Recommendations

Instagram's visually driven platform is well-suited to engage Millennials and Gen Z, offering opportunities to showcase the MASEM program's dynamic offerings.

Key recommendations include **highlighting behind-the-scenes content** by sharing visuals of campus life, classroom interactions, and collaborative projects, and utilizing Stories and Reels to provide an authentic look into the program's activities.

Maintain a cohesive visual design by using **eye-catching graphics and visuals**, integrating UTampa's brand colors and fonts, and posting educational and engaging content, such as tips on creating impactful digital campaigns or analyzing emerging trends.

Leverage user-generated content (UGC) by encouraging students and alumni to share their experiences using the program's hashtags and reposting content from students, particularly those featuring internships, projects, or events.

Incorporate interactive features by creating **polls or quizzes** about emerging media trends to spark engagement, using Instagram's poll, Q&A, and countdown stickers in Stories to engage followers, and developing Highlights for FAQs, student testimonials, and program achievements.

Promote events and resources by creating **flyers to promote events and workshops organized by the program**, using countdowns for future events to remind and engage followers, and using Linktree in the bio for easy navigation to the website, event details, and social content.

Use effective **call-to-actions (CTAs)** by crafting captions with compelling CTAs, such as "Learn more about MASEM – link in bio!" and using tools like Linktree in the bio for easy navigation to application forms, webinars, and other resources.

Discussion & Conclusion

The University of Tampa's Masters of Arts in Social and Emerging Media (MASEM) program was developed in Fall of 2021 (University of Tampa, 2024). Through extensive research, the MASEM Program can improve their social media reach by implementing some key changes. The research objective was to establish ways that MASEM can increase awareness and engagement for different audience segments, specifically Gen Z and Millennials. Social media helps universities stay current and adapt to trends (The Brand Education, 2024). By researching this, MASEM can find ways to improve their audience reach through social media.

To start off, it was necessary to determine the audience, their interests, and what engages them. Through a survey sample of mostly Gen Z and Millennials, it was determined that most of respondents trusted Instagram and LinkedIn the most in relation to university messaging (Qualtrics, 2024) The majority of respondents also wanted to see polls incorporated to university-related social media pages.

Surveyors were found to admit they mainly engage with educational content the most when on UTampa affiliated pages and they would like to see testimonials from UTampa graduate program's Instagram pages.

In an attempt to gather more feedback from the audience, an eye tracking study was performed. Two students and one professor participated in the study. It was found that logo placement in regards to location did not impact viewers interest in the post. Through analyzing eye tracking results, it was also found that Instagram page viewers spend a lot of time looking at the bio/highlight areas of an account.

Discussion & Conclusion

When looking at the MASEM programs feed, viewers eyes were attracted to the red and black logos and most were interested in the carousel posts.

The main takeaways from the eye tracking study was that the MASEM program should put graphics or text over photos for impact and attention, alternate or mix graphics and photos on their feed for smoother eye movement, use color strategically, and post photos of key moments.

Taking into consideration results from the survey and eye tracking study, MASEM can use keywords and hashtags such as 'Social Media Management,' 'Emerging Media Trends,' and 'Graduate Education.'

MASEM should also use flyers to promote events and workshops by the program, especially in areas both on and off campus. The program can create polls or quizzes about emerging media trends to spark engagement and draw in students.

Using both stories and reels to highlight student life, interviews, and guest speakers can help MASEM get a larger pool of students interested in getting involved in the program. Linktree and countdowns are also engaging ways to keep people interested.

Overall MASEM can implement these recommendations and take the information found in surveys and eye tracking studies to create a larger presence on Instagram and LinkedIn. They can focus on the forms of content that most effectively engage Gen Z and Millennials to increase their engagement and awareness through social media.

Discussion & Conclusion

Strengths

- The program is run by faculty with expertise in program categories such as communication, social media, emerging media, art, film, journalism, and public relations.
- MASEM has a greater social media presence than their competitors.
- The program has some of the recommended content, it can just be tweaked to engage viewers even more.

Weaknesses

- There is a lack of resources to achieve all MASEM has to show- no one specifically appointed to handle social media posting.
- The program cannot have a TikTok account, which is a platform that caters to over 60% of Gen Z (Forbes, 2020).

Discussion & Conclusion

Opportunities

- Create content in social platforms that MASEM's target audience already consistently engages with in their daily lives such as GRWM and 'A Day in the Life' videos.
- Professors can offer extra credit to undergraduate students to do marketing for the program's socials and/or turn it into an internship opportunity for experience.
- Flyers can be spread across campus and downtown Tampa as well as surrounding areas to promote awareness of the program.

Threats

- There is a lack of alumni engagement and interest in the program after graduation.
- The program is lacking in awareness across the University of Tampa and the surrounding community.

Deliverables

Social Media

Cross Platform Potential Content (Instagram & LinkedIn)



Deliverables

Social Media

Cross Platform Potential Content (Instagram & LinkedIn)



Deliverables

Interactive

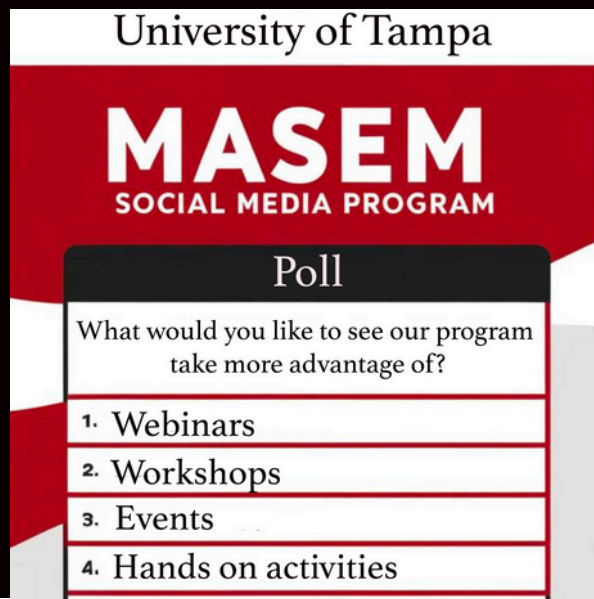
Low Cost Engagement and UGC Magnets for Events



Deliverables

Print

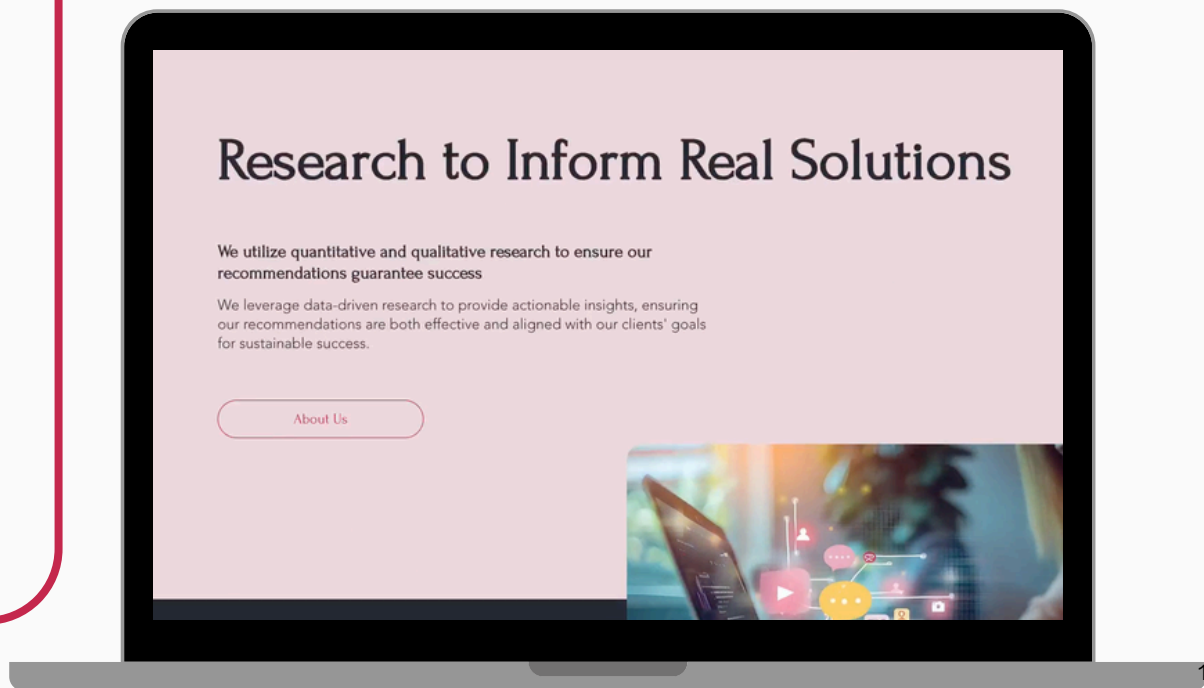
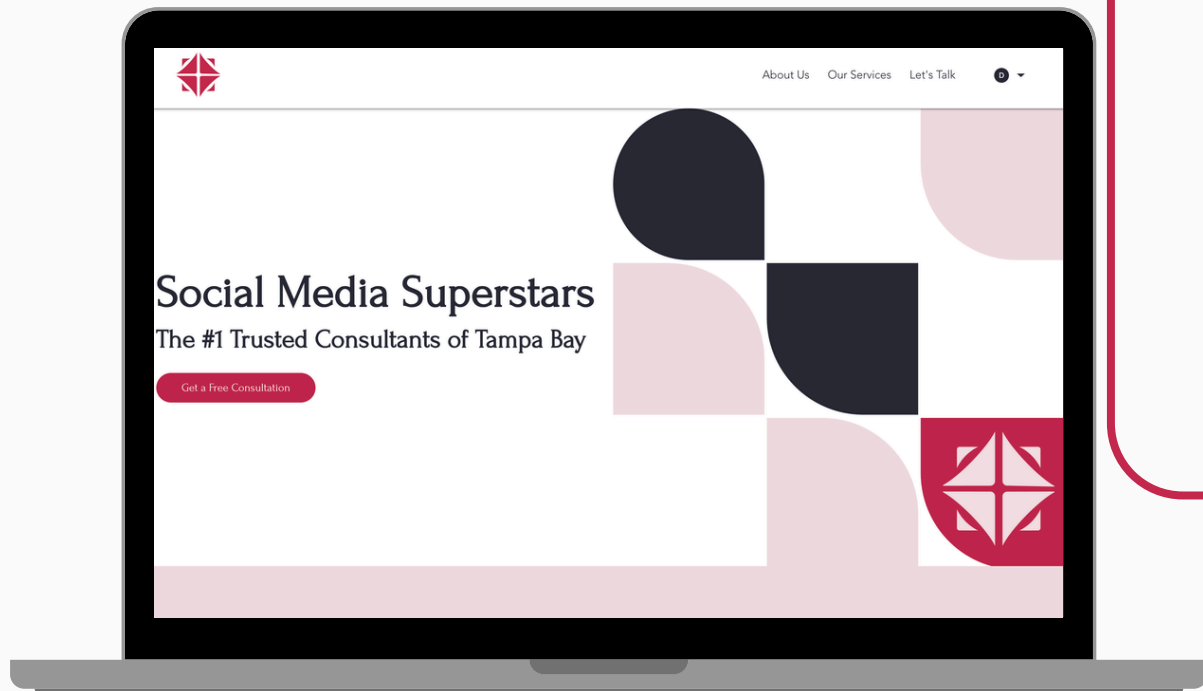
Flyers and Signage Targeted Towards Downtown Professionals and University Students





Social Media Superstars Promo

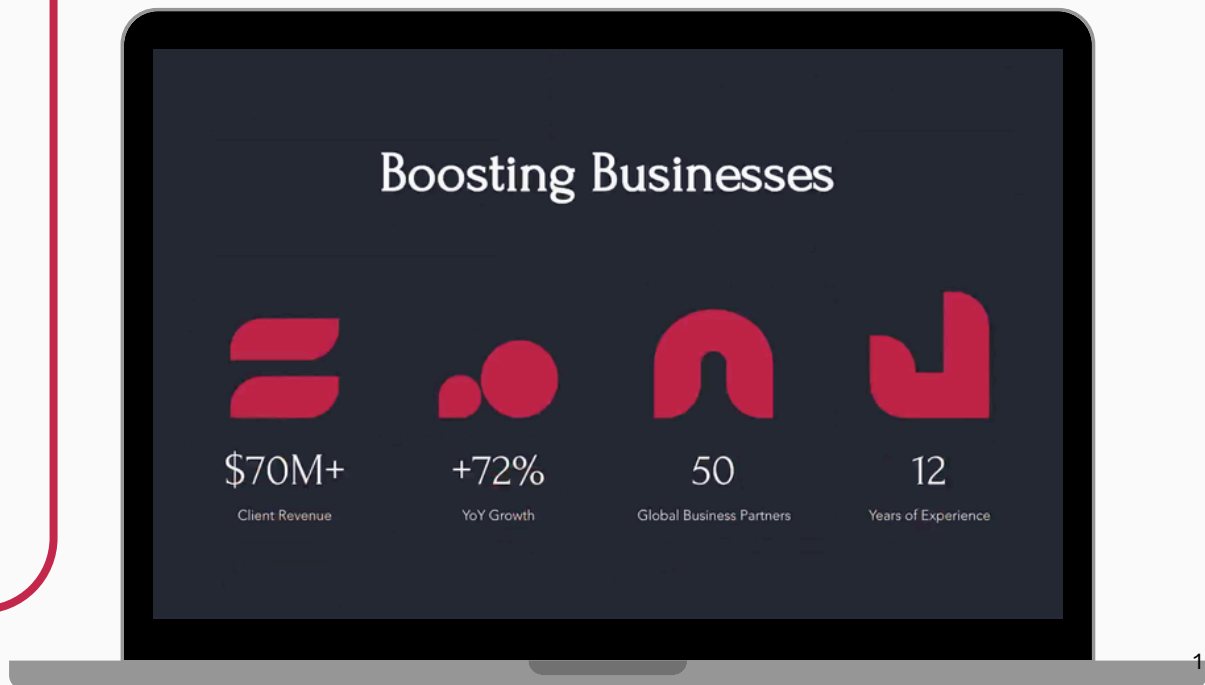
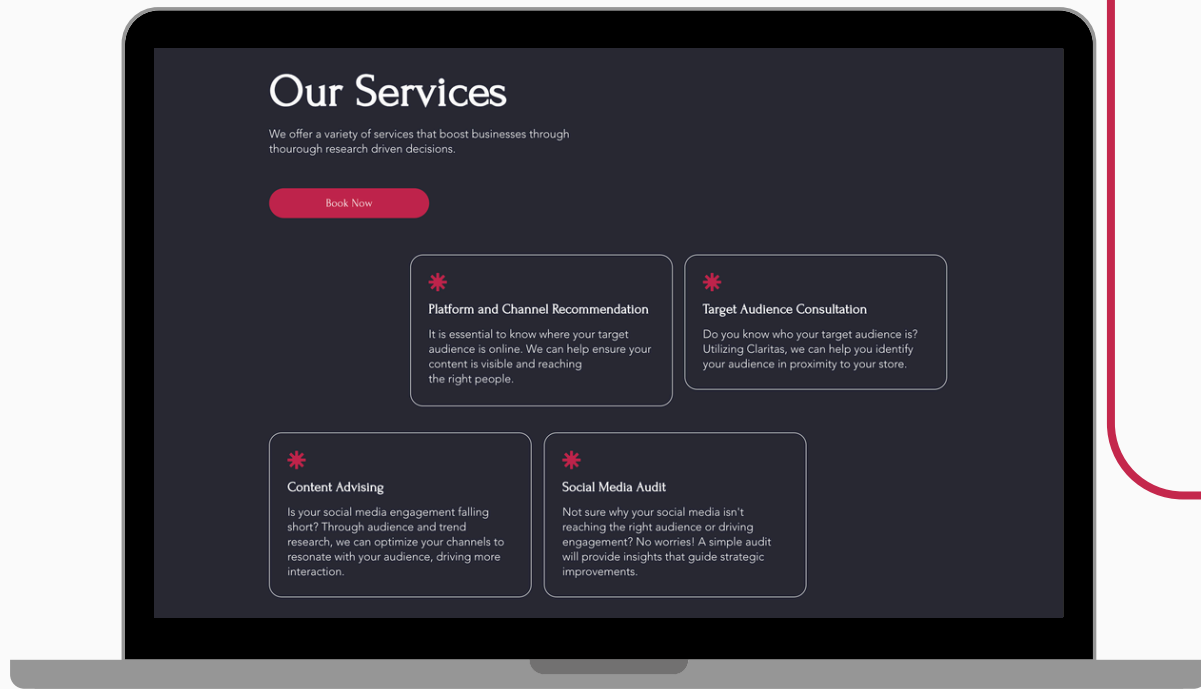
Website Homepage





Social Media Superstars Promo

Website Homepage



Social Media Superstars Promo

Website Homepage



Process

The simple method behind our success

01

Analysis & Research

Finding unique challenges and opportunities for growth

02

Strategy

Crafting tailored solutions that align with your core objectives

03

Execution

Creating impactful, lasting results

04

Ongoing Support

Monitoring and providing support as needed

Our Partners and Clients

energator

Heveia

RODOND

Ktilario

3TERNET



Call

123-456-7890

Email

info@mysite.com

Follow



References

Are more students using social media as a search engine?. keg_left_Sharp. (2024, October 1). <https://www.keg.com/news/are-more-students-using-social-media-as-a-search-engine>

Exploring the significance of social media for Universities. The Brand Education – Reputation management and strategic branding for leading higher-education institutions worldwide. (n.d.). <https://thebrandeducation.com/blog/social-media-for-universities/>

Graduate students honored at Masem Student exhibition. Graduate Students Honored at MASEM Student Exhibition. (n.d.). <https://www.ut.edu/news-and-ut-life/2024/graduate-students-honored-at-masem-student-exhibition-#:~:text=MASEM%20was%20launched%20at%20UT,and%20engage%20effectively%20with%20audiences>.

Holt, D. (2016, March). Branding in the Age of Social Media. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2016/03/branding-in-the-age-of-social-media>

Jasso, K. M. (2021). THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS OF OUT-OF-STATE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS (dissertation). Wichita State University, Wichita.

Muliadi, B. (2024, August 12). Council post: What the rise of TikTok says about generation Z. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbestechcouncil/2020/07/07/what-the-rise-of-tiktok-says-about-generation-z/>

Nguyen, T. (2024, March). *How to Conduct the Ultimate Social Media Audience Analysis*. Rival IQ. <https://www.rivaliq.com/blog/social-media-audience-analysis/>