

Internship Paper: University of Washington Intercollegiate Athletics Tyee Club

Introduction

Comment [WU1]: Heading

In being the Tyee Club Intern for the University of Washington Athletics Department for the school year 2012-13, there were a wide variety of expectations and duties I was responsible for in order to help the Tyee Club operate efficiently. The purpose of this internship was to provide a comprehensive experience of athletic fundraising and development. Through this position I gained knowledge and skills in providing game day hospitality, donor prospecting, priority seating and event management and planning. On a daily basis the responsibilities of this internship ranged from answering phone calls and providing customer service, to helping produce the Husky Hall of Fame, to sending out extensive mailers, to interacting with other departments and leaning about event management, marketing and student services. For the last third of the internship all of my time was spent reallocating the New Husky Stadium and reseating around 14,000 season ticket holders.

Comment [WU2]: Purpose of internship.

Although the number of interns changed throughout the year, for most of the year I was one of three or four interns for the Tyee Club. Our coordinator, Mike Plonski, was confident in our competence and put us solely in charge of projects for the Tyee Club. The Tyee Club Twitter account and Facebook page is managed by the intern team and we were in charge of increasing followers and the frequency of traffic to our accounts. Additionally, I was an administrator of the Young Tyee Club, a group specifically aimed at increasing awareness, involvement and relationships with athletic department donors under the age of thirty. In being an administrator of the Young Tyee Club, I was responsible for planning and coordinating member events, tracking and fulfilling membership requirements and implementing the renewal process.

Comment [WU3]: Description of accomplishments.

Learning Outcomes

Comment [WU4]: Heading

Content Knowledge

Comment [WU5]: Learning Outcome #1

Throughout the course of the Tye Club internship I was exposed to many facets of the sport management realm. The classes I have taken thus far all had an impact in how I was able to learn about and navigate the variability of tasks and responsibilities as well as the different people I collaborated with.

Specifically, starting with the content I learned in taking both Sport Consumer Behavior and Research Methods, I was able to conduct a consumer behavior research project on the Young Tye Club. The Tye Club, and in particular my supervisor, Mike, have been struggling with the current Young Tye Club program. The staff is trying to determine if the program should be altered or done away with entirely. In creating a survey with the help of my group, we were able to determine the main motivations and constraints to both membership in the Young Tye Club and the attendance at Young Tye Club events. The information we gathered through the survey allowed us to segment the current Young Tye Club market and offer recommendations that would help in the evaluation of the current program.

Comment [WU6]: Knowledge gained in classes.

Through taking the Strategic Marketing, I have increased my knowledge about the importance of branding and conveying to the consumer the “why” behind the product or service a company or athletic department provides. There have been many branding messages for various units of product that the University of Washington Athletic Department has released or will release to connect the consumers to the products and teams. For example, for the football team moving back into Husky Stadium, the current tagline is “Committed.” The idea behind this branding message is to prove to the football fan base that the team is committed to the school, the new stadium and the university community. Directly after the “Committed” campaign ends

Comment [WU7]: Knowledge gained in classes.

Comment [WU8]: Examples of knowledge about the interdisciplinary nature of sport management

around mid-July, Husky football will put out a new branding message of “Take Back Montlake.” This message will be used to signify the opening of the new season and the new Husky Stadium. In learning the importance of creating a branding message that helps consumer connect to the product, I believe the UW Athletics marketing team will be successful in their efforts. Through developing these branding messages, it is important for me as an intern to represent the power of the brand through the way I interact with consumers and ensuring a great interaction between the community and the athletic department.

Discovery and Inquiry

Comment [WU9]: Learning Outcome #2

In writing my Leadership Growth Plan for the Developing Leadership in Sport class, I defined that one of my strengths is the skill of inquiry. Asking questions and possessing this skill is crucial in discovering and understanding the issues that face an organization, a team of people, a system or an individual. In being inquisitive, a leader can examine problems by finding out the cause and understand what can be done to improve or change the situation. For example, I observed how the athletic department interacted with the Young Tyee club members and made suggestions on how it could be improved.

Comment [WU10]: Example of how discovery and inquiry skills were used.

Comment [WU11]: Observed the organization and how it interacted with the world

One thing I found myself doing over the course of my internship was asking questions to all of my supervisors. The questions I asked ranged from trying to develop and implement more effective ways to do some of the menial daily tasks to trying to determine why we do some of the things as a department. In asking questions it allowed for me to clarify my responsibilities, but also seemed to challenge how my supervisors viewed various problems. When I asked questions it made everyone I work with think about the way we do things and decipher whether the processes we have in place are the most effective.

Comment [WU12]: Questioning the status quo

Comment [WU13]: Investigated prior knowledge.

A goal of mine over the course of my internship was to improve on my networking skills.

I definitely feel that I improved dramatically in networking with people in the Athletics Department. I made it a goal of mine to develop close relationships with people that I do not necessarily work with consistently. I set up informational interviews with people in the department that I do not have direct contact with to discover more about how people got to the position they have and what has made them successful. I feel that I was successful in my networking and inquiry driven approach to this internship.

Comment [WU14]: Networking for new ideas

Critical Thinking

As was stated above, a large portion of my responsibility as the Tyee Club intern entailed both the management of the current Young Tyee Club program, but also the evaluation and areas of improvement that could be implemented to improve its direction and future. In order to truly understand the benefits of continuing such a program, research was conducted on other young alumni programs at Division I schools throughout the United States. One prominent discovery made through gathering information and analyzing its relevance was that many colleges and universities are struggling to connect with this portion of their target market. Additionally, it was made evident that because of the extreme variance in the way in which booster clubs and alumni groups are set up, there were few consistencies in the programming for young alumni athletic department supporters.

Comment [WU15]: Learning outcome #3.

Comment [WU16]: Analysis of problem.

Comment [WU17]: Dissecting into key elements, meanings or relationships.

Because on these factors, developing on or improving our current program was the main focus of strategically planning for the future of the Young Tyee Club. To accomplish this, the Tyee Interns as a group met many times after the initial stages of research to discuss the direction of the Young Tyee Club. We employed the method of a circle conversation, similar to how Native

Americans would discuss issues at hand. Our goal was just to talk openly and freely about suggestions, concerns, questions, and criticism of the current program. After these sessions, we are able to come together again and begin making decisions on which direction we should go in. Coupling these brainstorm sessions with the raw data collected from the survey I conducted for Consumer Behavior, it was evident we need to improve the current status of the Young Tye Club. The main focus for our proposal is to improve on all methods of communication with current and potential members through email and social media outlets, clarify the benefits, qualifications and the program as a whole and change the focus so that it is made more of a priority to the department.

Comment [WU18]: Devised solutions by integrating knowledge and value-based judgment

Comment [WU19]: Develop arguments for action through formal and informal assessment strategies

Communication Skills

Comment [WU20]: Learning Outcome #4

It became very apparent to me through the experience of this internship with the Tye Club, that effective verbal, nonverbal and written communication is essential to successful relationships and thus a successful athletic department. After taking *Developing Leadership in Sport*, I was much more aware of the way in which I communicated with my supervisors as well as my fellow interns. I tried to be more conscious of my audiences and that the way I delivered a message to co-workers would be different than how I deliver a message to my bosses.

Comment [WU21]: Referring back to class.

Additionally, I became tremendously more cognizant of how my body language was being interpreted and tried to make adjustments over the course of the internship.

Comment [WU22]: Used knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and/or media communication techniques to foster inquiry, collaboration, and engagement

Specifically addressing communication through social media outlets, we were given lessons from the social media director for the entire UW Athletics Department. I learned that there is a lot more involved in developing a brand and message through the use of social media outlets than meets the eye. First, it is essential that all messaging be aligned with University's

and the Athletics department's mission and goals. Whether it is a team specific account, a coach's account, the alumni group, or the Tyee Club account, it is important that all messages are in congruence. It is also important to be aware of your audience on social media outlets. You have to create messages and posts that will draw attention and more importantly get the right kind of attention. Timing and the frequency of posts is also critical in deciding what to post and through which outlet. The goal is to get the largest amount of eyes on your message and to create a buzz at least for a few minutes about what was communicated.

Comment [WU23]: Examples of how you listened to others with respect, operated well in teams, and conveyed ideas effectively in written and oral communications

Technology

Comment [WU24]: Learning Outcome #5

Before my internship with the UW Tyee Club, there were many areas in which I was technologically incompetent. For one, prior to this position I did not have a personal Facebook or Twitter account and did not really understand the importance of being active on social media. As stated above I learned many of the intricacies of creating a social media presence and maintaining a brand by marketing socially. It is imperative to stay current and relevant within this realm, because most people now consume a majority of their media through website like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter.

Along with my increased knowledge in the realm of social media, I also gained a lot of experience and familiarity with programs like Microsoft Excel and Outlook. Many of the projects we had to conduct on a day-to-day basis were analyzing data through Excel. The use of equations and many shortcuts I picked along the way has only increased my fluency in using this program and my comfort level in completing tasks.

Finally, through this internship I was exposed to many programs in which I had never dealt with prior. I now have extensive knowledge in donor databases such as the University level

system, Advance, and the program used specifically in the Tye Club, Advantage. By using these systems, one can get a broad picture of the levels of giving an individual is responsible for, basic demographic information, and the type of season ticket holders as well as how long they have been purchasing. This information is all helpful in determining how to interact with various people and provide the highest level of customer service. Through the reallocation the Husky football season ticket holders in the new Husky Stadium, I was able to gain considerable experience in the use of Archtics, or the TicketMaster interface. I can conduct transactions, track sales, and analyze season ticket holder information. This internship helped me acquire skills and a considerable amount of knowledge in many aspects of technology use that I did not have a year ago.

Comment [WU25]: Examples of how you used technology to improve the effectiveness of your professional performance

Lifelong Learning

In completing my first year in the MSAL program while working as an intern for the Tye Club, I have learned a lot about myself professionally, socially and academically. Retrospectively, this year has been the most influential time in my life and has contributed to my growth as an individual on many levels. By applying the concepts and theories learned and experiences gained in my coursework I have been able to approach this internship with a perspective never used in previous work experiences.

Comment [WU26]: Learning Outcome #6

After taking Leadership in Sport Organizations, I became very aware of both my communication style and the communication styles of my supervisors and coworkers. A few concepts really stood out from the readings we covered in that class that I wanted to be conscious of and address as I work to improve my communication style. One thing that I was made aware of and became part of my growth leadership plan is the idea that to most effectively

Comment [WU27]: Referring back to a class.

communicate a message to your audience you must match your nonverbal cues with what you are stating. For me I know that people say that I always “look mad” or that I do not smile, so while working at the Tyee Club I wanted to address this issue. I started by making sure that everyone I saw I would make eye contact with, smile and say hello. Additionally, when speaking to the people I work with I focused on being present and conscious of my actions while communicating. However, this is something that I need to continue to address in all aspects of my life.

Comment [WU28]: Examples of how you are becoming a reflective professional who actively seeks to further self-knowledge and seeks opportunities to grow professionally

Conclusion

Comment [WU29]: Heading

After completing my internship with the University of Washington Tyee Club I was able to reflect on what I could have done better and thus what could be improved for future interns. Beginning with the interns being administrators of the Young Tyee Club, there is much improvement needed with the program. When I first started the internship, the objectives of the program were unclear and the responsibilities of the Tyee interns in terms of our exact role were underdeveloped. To address this confusion and lack of consistency, we created a Young Tyee Club Operations Manual to hopefully alleviate this in the future.

Additionally, it is clear that the use of social media is quite effective in reaching a younger demographic and an inexpensive way to truly brand an organization. I think that to improve the Tyee Club internship, there should be more of an emphasis placed on really driving the social media efforts.

It would have also been helpful to learn about the development world from the beginning. We had a few meetings with some of the Major Gift Officers with about a month left in the internship, but it would have been useful to comprehend development from a larger perspective

earlier on. Our interactions with donors were limited to complaints over the phone about not getting preferential parking lots and a more extensive knowledge of advancement could have been helpful to aid in the process.

Finally, another improvement that I believe will really enhance this internship and increase the quality of production of the Tyee Club is to collaborate with other departments more consistently. It would have beneficial to have worked with the marketing department, public relations and even event management to share ideas and make for better output.

Comment [WU30]: Suggestions on how the organization could improve the internship