

UB 2020 Site Key Findings

Web Content Initiative Discovery

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Business needs
- Audience
- Benchmarking
- Current Situation
- Recommendations for change
- Discussion

Business Needs

Primary

- Put a face on the UB 2020 gestalt, as well as each of its primary components
- Builds support, pride, excitement
- Serve as a dashboard for progress and future direction

Secondary

- Archival needs

Business Needs: Primary

Builds support for UB 2020:

- Platform to communicate UB 2020's vision, benefits and impact
- Builds coalition for achieving UB 2020 vision
 - building pride
 - transparency
 - opportunities for feedback
- Raises the university's profile
 - builds its reputation
 - excites and inspires supporters and potential supporters

Business Needs: Primary

Puts a face on UB 2020 initiatives:

- Clearly conveys vision and context
- Communicates next steps and why they're important to UB's future
- Aligns UB 2020 within the UB brand
 - Research that makes a difference, Global, Community, Excellence, the "Buffalo way"
- Defines a consistent set of messages concerning UB 2020's vision and initiatives

Business Needs: Primary

Functions as a **one-stop** Web site for the latest information on UB 2020:

- Dashboard for progress
- Opportunities for involvement

Business Needs: Secondary

Serves as a **repository**

- Archived reports and other
- Materials documenting UB 2020 progress
- Preserves institutional knowledge

Audience

Primary

- Internal Audience (faculty, staff, students)
- UB leaders/communicators
- Potential faculty, staff, senior administrators
- External influencers, community leaders

Secondary

- Prospective Students
- Higher ed leaders/media
- Western New York community (to gain a sense of what's going on "in their backyard")

Audience Segments

UB Supporters: bringing UB forward

- Believe in UB
- Advocate on UB's behalf
- Actively support UB's success through advocacy, coalition building or funding.

This segment goes across the board for all primary audiences.

Audience Segments

Pulse-takers: Staying in alignment

- Dashboard for progress, messages and what is in the center of UB's radar screen
- Foreshadow where we are going next.

Most of the UB leaders or communicators and grassroots internal leaders within the UB community fall into this category, as well as those influencers, higher education leaders and external audience members who are "on board."

Audience Segments

Future UB Supporters: Verifying the buzz

- Considering “joining” the UB community as faculty, staff or students.
- Considering supporting UB’s goals through funding or advocacy
- Want to find out more about UB 2020
- Benchmarking

This segment goes across the board for all primary and secondary audiences

Future UB Supporters ideally become Pulse-takers or UB Supporters.

Positioning

What we want them to think:

- Innovative
- **Collaborative**
- Informative
- Accurate
- **Interdisciplinary**
- Bold
- Inspiring
- **Relevant**

Desired Outcomes

- Put a face on UB 2020 in clear understandable language
 - UB's long-term strategic plan
 - Created collectively by faculty, staff and administration
 - Positions UB more competitively in a challenging time
 - Designed to realize our true potential as a national, even world-class, research university
 - Interdisciplinary approach to research
 - Physical facilities that support our vision
 - Working in partnership with our community to get the support, along with the changes needed to implement this plan

Desired Outcomes

- Connect UB 2020 initiatives under one umbrella and to the overall mission and activities of UB
- Communicate how world-class research and scholarship leads to individual and collective opportunity:
 - World-class education
 - A 21st century research university
 - Cutting edge research transferred to the marketplace
 - Regional Impact
- Inspire participation and support
- Contain timely and relevant information

Best Practices: Defining purpose

- Platform to communicate strategic planning vision, benefit and impact
- Outlining fundamental reasons for strategic planning
 - [University of Colorado at Boulder](#): “Why Flagship 2030?”
 - [Emory University](#): “Emory University's core purpose is to create, preserve, teach, and apply knowledge in the service of humanity.”
 - [University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign](#): Succinctly defines the fundamental purpose of strategic planning

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Best Practices: Putting a face on the plan

Strategic goals

- Top strategic goals typically listed on front page or prominently
 - [University of Georgia](#): Divided into six strategic goals, with succinct overviews of each goal
 - [Emory University](#): “Five Pillars of Courageous Inquiry” with accompanying PDF
 - [University of Missouri – Columbia](#): Current strategic initiatives divided into four strategic goals

Best Practices: Putting a face on the plan

Core values

- Typically bullet-point list with brief summaries
- Serves as guiding principles to the strategic plan
 - [University of Cincinnati](#): Lists the following core values: Scholarship, Citizenship, Stewardship, Leadership, Partnership, Cultural Competence
 - [University of Wisconsin – Madison](#): Defines core values through a list of guiding principles

Best Practices: Outcomes and next steps

- Outlining quantifiable outcomes, success measures and future plans
- Creates accountability and facilitates seeing growth and progress
 - [University of Iowa](#): “Indicators of Progress”
 - [University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign](#): Annual reports of progress documents that summarize the key accomplishments of the campus towards the goals of the strategic plan

Best Practices: Overall Trends

- No overall best practice sites
- No consistent trends
- Many major university sites are without a university-wide strategic planning site
 - Strategic planning communications occurs on a department-specific level
- Many sites appear to be several years out of date
- Focused around annual updates
- Focus on laying out the plan and **fail** to:
 - Build Coalition
 - Inspire
 - Provide transparency in process
 - Communicate progress in a timely manner
- Very light on content
- dates
- Formatted as single report-style PDF or series of PDF documents

Current Situation: Overview

Overall state of current website

- Suffers for lack of a strategic communications plan
- Does not put a face on UB 2020 as a whole or give a sense of the interconnectivity of its parts
- Built when UB 2020 focus was discussion and forming ideas
- Does not reflect current needs: a robust active plan whose vision is in progress and whose future needs to be supported.
- Suffers from a lack of “ownership.”

Current Situation: Content Audit

Content audit outcomes

- Dated material detracts from integrity and relevance
- Uncontrolled growth (322 pages plus hundreds of links)
- Inconsistently cared for
 - Detailed, valuable information in some portions of the site, and old or unnecessary content in others.
 - Some sections show care, attention and timeliness, others are dated to various degrees, or—worse—do not look well cared for.
 - Too many pages desperately need pruning, realignment or excision

Current Situation: Usage

- **Communication plans attract the “right” visitors** rather than simply trying to increase the volume of traffic.
- Current Data

| | Hits per year | Avg. hits per week | % External Visitors |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| UB 2020 Overview | 29,565 | 567 | 62% |
| Strategic Strengths | 9,573 | 183 | 57% |
| Building UB* | 127,752 | 2,470 | 58% |
| ITST Initiative | 17,819 | 341 | 45% |

**Receives relatively little regular traffic, but there are extremely high surges in traffic that are affected by campaigns.*

Conclusion

- Absent an **overall strategic communications plan**, the site can not truly be effective.
- Purpose of the site has evolved. To **support the identified business needs**, the current site has to change radically.
 - Put a face on UB 2020, our initiatives, outcomes and next steps
 - One-stop site to get the latest information regarding UB 2020 progress, updates, involvement opportunities
- Needs to reposition as a **sustainable** site that **supports the core focus**: building support for UB 2020 (communicate the vision, build pride and reputation)

Recommendations

- Needs a strategic communications strategy that UB 2020 and its supporting initiatives can follow.
- Put a face on UB 2020:
 - Brief introduction to UB 2020's overall vision and purpose.
 - Integrate with UB brand
 - Tie in with messaging from the president
 - Include overviews on more UB 2020 initiatives such as Great Place to Work or the Undergraduate Transformation.
- Facilitate transparency through feedback and opportunities for open involvement.

Recommendations

- Assign ownership and staff the site appropriately.
- Shrink in scope to accomplish sustainability.
 - Create a sustainable content plan supporting the creation of timely and relevant information.
 - Realign content to focus on the present (and future)
 - Archive past progress, just keeping highlights
 - Eliminate low-value pages.
- Layer the information with a “sip or dine” approach
 - Shorter summary style for the basic “elevator” talk
 - Link to deeper information for practitioners who need deep, robust information.

Recommendations

- Facilitate collaboration.
 - Build out the directory of the faculty involved in the strategic strengths
 - Institutionalize and blend with university-wide products such as eCV, or the reporting database housed by Institutional Analysis
- Downloadable “take aways” that summarize UB 2020, the economic impact, and the initiatives.

Discussion

Outcomes needed:

- Identify any areas where we are off target or need to refine (make suggestions)
- Affirm the areas where we are on target