



ALPHA
PRODUCTIONS



FINAL CAMPAIGN

REPORT



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ABSTRACT

In the last year, the University of Florida's Department of Public Relations hired Alpha PRoductions to increase awareness of the organization's goals, missions and offerings. The work spanned two semesters, which began fall of 2022 and ended spring of 2023. The team met weekly to analyze research, discuss strategies and plan an event, all of which contributed to the main goal of bringing more traction to the program. The evaluation of this campaign will be better measured once registration for fall 2023 courses is complete and the number of students registered in Principles of Public Relations (PUR3000).

FALL SEMESTER

Research

To better understand UF students' sentiments surrounding public relations and the UF PR Department, we conducted two focus groups and one survey.

Focus Groups

The focus groups took place at 10 a.m. on Nov. 17, 2022. Participants were recruited using a Google Form that was sent to classes and student organizations at UF. The 14 participants were separated based on whether or not they were PR majors to create two groups, majors and non-majors. The non-majors group included students studying advertising and environmental science.

Survey

The survey was distributed to students from Nov. 19, 2022, to Jan. 18, 2023. It should be noted there was a break in outreach between Dec. 17, 2022, to Jan. 8, 2023, for winter break. Participants were recruited by reaching out to classes and student organizations at UF.

Examples of classes that received our survey include:

- MAR 2951: Sales Seminar
- MAR 3023: Principles of Marketing
- ECO 2013: Principles of Macroeconomics
- SPM 2000: Intro to Sport Management.

Examples of student organizations that received our survey include:

- Hispanic Public Relations Student Association (HPRSA)
- Gelée Magazine
- Her Campus at UFL.

There were a total of 68 respondents who were split into two groups based on whether or not they were PR majors; 13 (19.12%) were majors, while 55 (80.88%) were non-majors.

STRATEGIES

Below is an overview of the strategies that were presented to the UF Public Relations Department based on the research conducted by Alpha PRoductions during the fall semester. Not all of these strategies were implemented but they were still presented to the client.

EVENTS

01. PR Open House

PR Open House would be an event where students can learn more about PR electives by allowing them to attend 10-minute presentations from professors teaching those specific courses. This event would give students outside of the College of Journalism and Communications an opportunity to hear more about professional electives offered by the PR Department.

Based on our research we found:

- 50% of students surveyed rated their understanding of public relations as “poor” before taking PUR3000
- 50% of students surveyed said they were “interested” in PR after taking PUR3000

02. PR Minor Info Session

The PR Minor Info Session would be an information session for students about the PR minor. The event would show that PR skills are applicable to any future career path, and that it is possible to learn about PR without completely changing your major. This information session would introduce what PR is and provide details about the minor.

Based on our research we found:

- 66% of non-majors surveyed said they felt PR was related or very related to their current field of study
- 94% of non-majors surveyed said their major is important for their career goals

03. Breakfast with PR Students

Host a social between current PR students and first-years interested in PR to show prospective students what studying PR at UF is like from a student's perspective. This event would include brief introductions from students and break-out groups to create a casual environment that demonstrated how versatile and welcoming the PR program is. Based on our focus group participants said:

- One participant said it was "motivating" to be speaking with communications students at the focus group. She said she enjoyed hearing about everyone's involvement in PR and that it was "refreshing" to be around people who were purposeful with their words.
- "I feel like it (campus involvement) definitely probably gives you, like, a better sense of purpose because, as she said, there are people around you that are motivating you."

SOCIAL MEDIA

04. What is PR to you?

A TikTok or reel campaign where public relations students answer the question "What does public relations mean to you?" to define public relations to those who don't know what it is and demonstrate the passion students have for the field.

Based on our research we found:

- 31% of all survey respondents said they have heard that PR is only social media
- 21% of all survey respondents said they have heard that PR is just about "spinning facts"

05. Professional Pathways

A social media campaign where professors can share their experience in different PR industries with students to give students an idea of what it's like working in different industries. This would be a series of videos on the CJC website to guide new students. Based on our research we found:

- 46% of students found their current major through the major list provided by the UF website
- 18% of students found their current major through an academic advisor

SPRING SEMESTER

COFFEE ON US EVENT

Research Insight

Based on our research, we found that students majoring in PR are passionate about the subject they are studying and welcoming to those who want to learn more about it.

In our major focus group, participants were eager to connect with one another. Everyone was attentive when someone was speaking, and they engaged in active listening by nodding and maintaining eye contact. Near the end of the discussion, participants noticed BeReal notifications had been sent out and decided to take their BeReals with each other. BeReal is a social media app where users receive one notification per day that prompts them to take a photo of what they are doing at that moment. BeReals can be taken any time after the notification has been sent and are shared with friends only, which demonstrates how comfortable participants felt to include each other in it. The idea of BeReal is that it is more authentic than other forms of social media, which makes it even more significant that PR students who just met one another felt comfortable enough to include each other in it. Participants also connected with each other on LinkedIn. The overall atmosphere between everyone was friendly.

The major's focus group also spent time discussing how they felt about the strong sense of community the PR program creates. Here are some quotes that stood out from this discussion:

- "It's not exclusionary. Everyone's always welcoming people."
- "Everyone that you talk to (in PR) is super passionate about the major that they're part of."
- "There are people around you that are motivating you."

EXECUTION

With this in mind, we sought to create an opportunity to show those who are not PR majors how strong the community is in the program.

Previously, we suggested hosting a breakfast with PR students based on the insights listed above. This idea was adapted into an event called Coffee On Us!, which was held on March 3, 2023, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Concord Coffee (1380 W. University Ave.). This event was designed to connect non-majors with current PR students so they could learn more about public relations offerings at UF. It was meant to be casual in nature, and allow students to speak candidly about their classes and career aspirations. It was a coffee tab paid for by the PR Department, so attendees could get a free drink.

To promote the event, we reached out to classes and student organizations at UF and presented the event flier in classes and tabled at the Heavener School of Business.

Examples of classes where we promoted the event include:

MAR 3023: Principles of Marketing

MAR 4803: Marketing

Management

MAR 3503: Consumer Behavior

MMC 1009: Intro to Media and Communications

LEI 3301: Travel and Tourism.

Examples of student organizations we reached out to include:

American Marketing Association

Black Students in Business

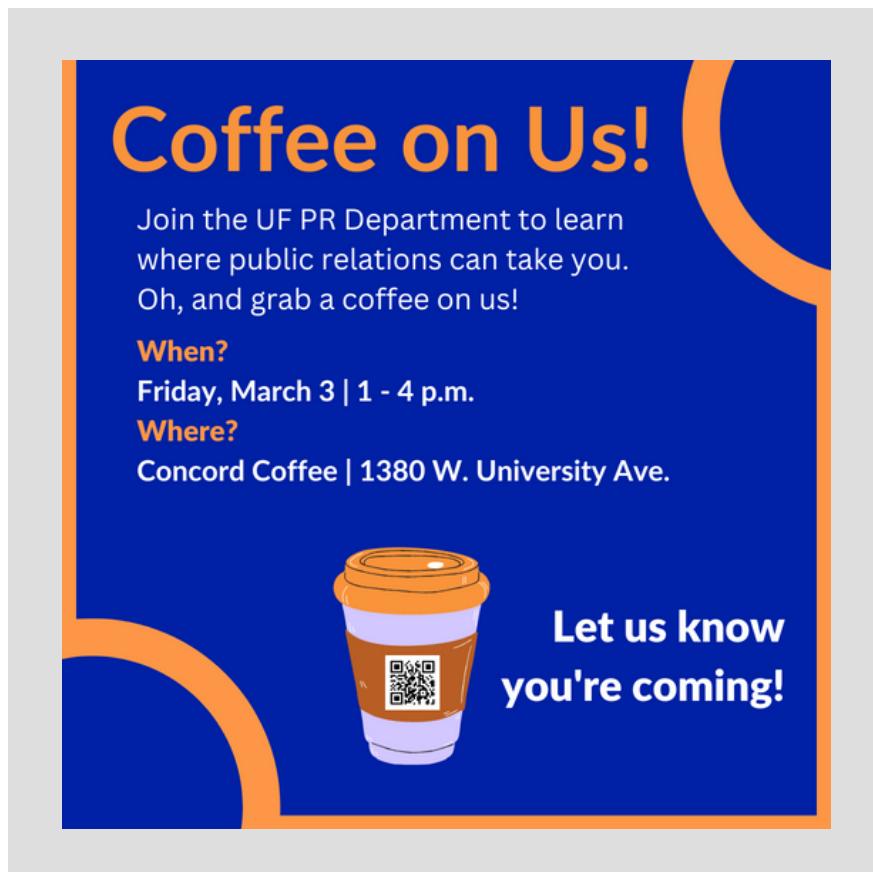
Florida Business Leadership Society

Student Finance Group

UF Global Business Society

The flier features a blue header with the text 'LET US INTRODUCE YOU TO PR' in white. To the right is a circular image of a modern building with a glass roof. Below the header, a section titled 'WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?' is followed by a detailed description of PR's role in building meaningful connections through strategic communication. Another section, 'WHERE CAN PR TAKE YOU? A BETTER QUESTION WOULD BE: WHERE CAN'T PR TAKE YOU?', discusses the versatility of PR careers. The flier also includes sections on 'INDUSTRIES FOR PR PROFESSIONALS' (Entertainment, Health, Hospitality and travel, Fashion, Finance, Sports, Technology, Politics/Social Advocacy) and 'PR CAREER PATHS' (Corporate Communications, Digital Strategy, Copywriting, Social Media Management, Data Analytics and Insights, Public Interest Communications). At the bottom, there is a call to action with social media handles (@UFPRDepartment, @UFPublicRelations) and a website link (www.jou.ufl.edu/pr).

We presented the event flier in PUR 3000: Principles of Public Relations and HFT 4517: Convention Sales and Service. We tabled at Heavener from Feb. 27, 2023, to March 1, 2023, for two hours each day. This involved hanging up and handing out fliers to students. On the event flier, we included a QR code with a link to a Google form where students could RSVP for the event. We received 15 responses.



The event was hosted by our entire Alpha PRoductions team, including our assistant managing director, account supervisor and account executives, and PR Department Chair Dr. Myiah Hutchens. We created fliers to give attendees that included information about public relations and the offerings UF has related to it. We had attendees check in using a Google form. From there, we engaged in conversations with attendees about their current studies and answered their questions about public relations while sipping on coffee. We shared our experiences in classes, student organizations and internships with attendees to give them a fuller picture of what it was like to study public relations.

We had eight event attendees that filled out the check-in form. The conversations with event attendees were engaging and educational, and we feel the event successfully conveyed the friendliness of the UF PR program.

PR PATHWAYS

Research Insight

After conducting research, Alpha PRoductions discovered that students who are seeking a degree in public relations highly appreciate the variety of industries that are available to them after graduating.

During our major focus group, all participants agreed that one of the most appealing aspects of pursuing a degree in public relations is its versatility. They believed that since public relations is relevant in various industries, they would have the flexibility to pursue their preferred career path in the future. The participants perceived this as a favorable characteristic of studying public relations, and two of them even cited it as their primary reason for choosing to study the major.

The major's focus group also spent time discussing the benefits of pursuing public relations

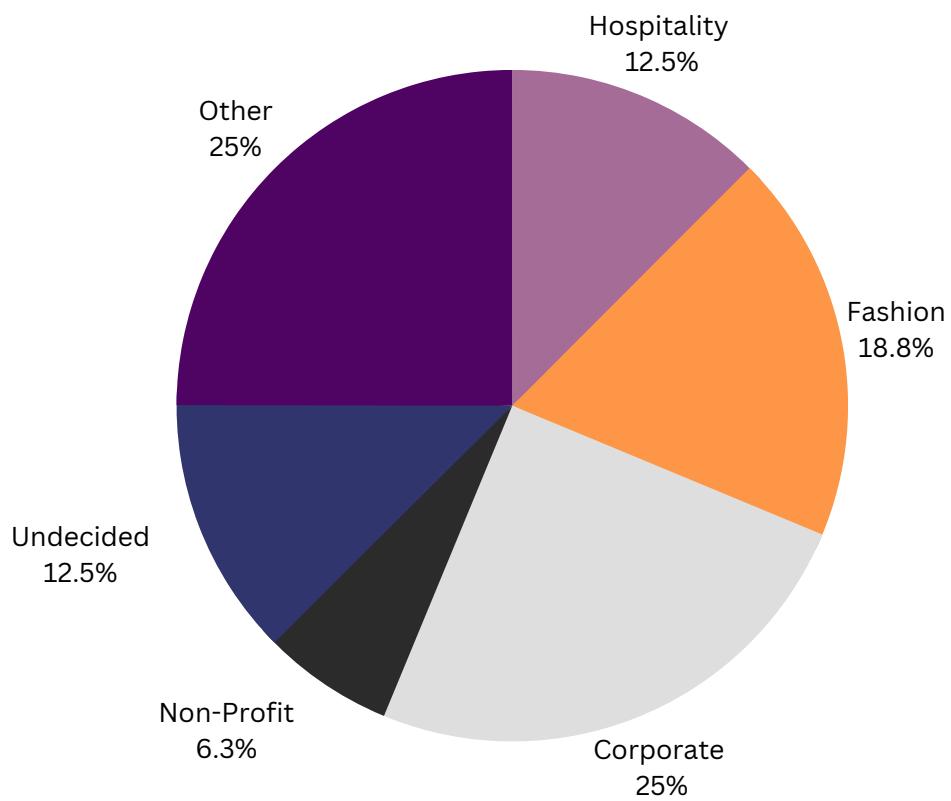
“I felt like out of all four of the majors, it (public relations) was, like, the broadest, I guess, and I could do a lot with it.”

“I like how general it (public relations) is. You really can do anything”

One participant said she loved the “freedom for creativity” her classes permitted. “I don't think I have done any projects in my PR coursework where it was just kind of, you had to follow the instructions to the tee,” she said. “There's definitely been situations where professors have allowed me to kind of venture out of what was specified.”

Based on the PR majors who took the survey there is no industry that stands out demonstrating the versatility of students and the field.

Areas of Interest for PR Majors



EXECUTION

PROfessional Pathways is a Buzzfeed-style quiz that was intended to place participants in a public relations industry that would best fit their lifestyle. The quiz was intended to reveal the numerous opportunities in public relations and create some buzz around the major by providing resources students can take advantage of.

To ensure that we had a diverse and representative sample, we connected with teachers and clubs within the business school. We asked that they share information about the public relations major, and encourage students to participate in our research by taking the PROfessional Pathways quiz. Through these outreach efforts, we were able to collect 74 responses from the University of Florida students.

The quiz involved 12 questions that aimed to identify the respondent's ideal public relations industry based on their preferences. The questions asked about the type of area they dream of living in, their preferred work style, their hobbies, and how they deal with stress, among other things.

The results varied on the preference of the respondents and sorted each person into the following industry:

- Public Interest Communications
- Technology
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Entertainment
- Fashion & Beauty
- Finance

Following the survey, students were given additional information about the public relations industry they had been assigned. Respondents were provided with direct links to the PRSSA website, contact information to the University of Florida Journalism School, clubs to get involved in, and class codes to enroll in if they were interested in pursuing a career in public relations.

The quiz results showed that the entertainment industry was the most popular sector for respondents with 35 results and fashion followed with 19 results. These results are not representative of the student population at the University of Florida, but the results demonstrate the number of students exposed to the resources that the UF Public Relations Department has to offer.

Entertainment PR
You should look into...Entertainment PR!

The entertainment industry encompasses film, television, streaming services, social media, celebrities and sports. As an entertainment PR practitioner, you have your thumb on the pulse of the latest trends. You are quick to adapt to unpredictable circumstances, and use your social savviness to bring your clients to the top. Jobs in entertainment PR can be found in publicity agencies, professional sports teams and film distribution companies. You don't get much time to relax, but hey, that's show business, baby!

The UF PR Department has opportunities for students interested in entertainment PR, such as:

- [Public Relations Student Society of America \(PRSSA\)](#) | [@ufprssa](#)
- [Sports Media Society \(SMS\)](#)
- Available Courses: Principles of Public Relations (PUR 3000), Personal Branding in Sports and Entertainment (PUR 4932), Industry Perspectives: Entertainment PR (PUR 4243), Sports Communication (PUR 3463)

For more information about public relations at UF:

- Website: www.jou.ufl.edu/pr
- Instagram: [@UFPRDepartment](#)
- Twitter: [@UFPRDepartment](#)
- Advising Contact: Judy Hunter, jhunter@jou.ufl.edu

LIMITATIONS

Some of the limitations of the research conducted include:

- The number of individuals surveyed and that attended the focus group was not a representative sample
- Some of those surveyed were upperclassmen and may have answered they wouldn't change their major because it would set them behind
- Freshmen's understanding of PR isn't perfectly measured because they aren't in most of the courses we reached

LOOKING FORWARD

Further Research

Our team advises the PR Department to further research PR-adjacent majors and how high school students select their college majors

The questions we asked participants in our survey were designed so students of any major could answer them. However, further research should seek to target PR-adjacent majors such as business administration, English and political science. Based on our research, these majors intersect the most with public relations, so students focusing on these subjects would be best for the PR Department to understand. We recommend creating surveys for and recruiting participants from these majors to better understand their perceptions of their current majors, their understanding of public relations and their likelihood to enroll in public relations courses.

We also recommend conducting research on how high school students select their college majors. From our research, we found that 46% of survey respondents found their current major on the UF website. However, we are unsure when these students found their major. It would be interesting to research if high school students are finding their college majors this way, or in a way we haven't considered. With this research, a strategy can be created and implemented to better connect the PR Department with high school students.

Strategy Implementation

Our team advises the PR Department to further implement the following strategy based on our research as it could be helpful in increasing the student's understanding of public relations and the variety of industries.

- Produce a high-quality video that describes public relations in respective industries such as fashion, hospitality, and corporate to display on the UF Public Relations department website.