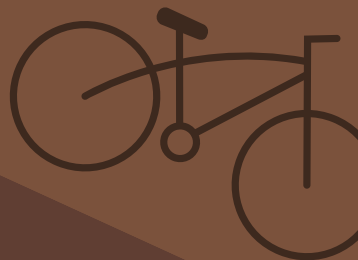


2025-2028  
Integrated  
Marketing Plan

# Paths to Renewal:

Nurturing Our Shared Future

Sponsored By: Sheth Foundation



# Contributors

## Case Director

Hayley Krysinski

## Case Managers

Ellie Breunig, Elle Hersperger, Ashley Rockweiler

## Graphic Designer

Ciara Hesselman

## Contributors

Cami Allaire, Kennedy Cortes, Haley Friedrich,  
Grace Meyer, Erica Pronschinske, Payton Scharl,  
Nolan Wiedmeyer

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# Executive Summary.

Sustainability is a growing concern in the nation. However, many misconceptions stem from sustainability, making individuals and organizations unaware of their role in creating a more sustainable future. Due to greenwashing, consumers need clarification about what organizations they can trust to participate in sustainable practices. Consumers want to be more sustainable but must learn how to do it.

The solution to these challenges is educating organizations on the importance of sustainability in their practices. By providing knowledge about sustainable benefits, organizations can also learn how to promote sustainable practices with their consumers. Consumers are more likely to practice sustainability if they are aware of their actions and the benefits it brings them.

Certifications are a great way to educate consumers about how organizations act sustainably. It also educates organizations on how they can be sustainable. An organization undergoing a certification process can receive a green check mark highlighting its efforts. Consumers will have a way to identify quickly that the organization they are buying from supports sustainability. Universities can also receive certifications highlighting their efforts in sustainable practices and educating students on how to be sustainable.

To better communicate their sustainable actions, organizations can provide an impact tab that gives information about their sustainable acts. Consumers can learn what the organizations are doing and how to use the products sustainably. The impact tab will include information like a "How To" section, telling consumers how to be sustainable through that organization. The impact tab will provide easy access for consumers wanting more information about sustainability.

Academic institutions can create competitions to encourage student involvement and learning about sustainability. The best way to learn about sustainability is to actively participate in it. Institutions that support these competitions will bring awareness of how they are helping create a sustainable future.

Education is the key to bringing awareness to the rising issue of sustainability. A collective effort starts with organizations communicating these actions. Providing information that encourages wise consumption is a step in the right direction for creating a sustainable world. People must know their actions matter.

# Purpose.

This generic sustainable Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) plan will provide organizations with the information needed to implement more sustainable marketing practices. The organization implementing this plan will use the target market that best fits their goals.

## Objectives

The execution of this sustainable IMC plan consists of five objectives to showcase how the marketing industry, companies, students, and individuals can utilize education to promote sustainable strategies and practices.

- **Objective 1:** Increase understanding among consumers, students, marketing professionals, and business leaders of what sustainability is and the importance of having a sustainable future.
- **Objective 2:** Increase awareness of the need for sustainability and sustainable business practices among consumers, students, marketing professionals, and business leaders.
- **Objective 3:** Determine if business schools are preparing and educating students appropriately to be able to participate in sustainable business and sustainability marketing efforts to create a sustainable future.
- **Objective 4:** Increase marketing's influence on the development of a sustainable society.
- **Objective 5:** Increase participation by individuals and industries to think and act more sustainable

This sustainable IMC plan achieves these objectives through the analysis of situational and environmental context of sustainability in the nation. That analysis provides context for further research. The research will be the foundation of the recommendations provided in the sustainable IMC plan.

## Target Market

### Companies

Companies are looking to be educated on implementing sustainable practices into everyday business.

### Marketing Industries

The marketing industry is looking to educate consumers on the importance of sustainable shopping and the benefits that come with it.

### Students/Individuals

Students and individuals want to be more educated on different products, what is sustainable, and how buying a higher quality product will save money in the long run.

Any of the stated groups can apply this sustainable IMC plan. Targeting these groups is crucial in ensuring a sustainable future through education.

# Situational Analysis.

## PESTLE Analysis

Sustainable practices require an analysis of environmental factors. Organizations should consider what landscape they are entering. Focusing on these factors will help the organization succeed and better understand consumers when implementing this sustainable IMC plan.

P	E	S	T	L	E
Political	Economic	Social	Technological	Legal	Environment
Regulations	Inflation	Age Demographics Greenwashing	Management Tools Logistics	Product Labeling Packaging Laws MSCI ESG Ratings FTC Guidelines	Natural Threats

\*See PESTLE Analysis breakdown in Appendix A

## Key Insights

An analysis of external factors identified key insights impacting the IMC plan. Government regulations should be considered when establishing sustainable practices because they affect whether sustainable actions occur. The economic state can also affect the likelihood of people purchasing sustainable products. Age demographics are crucial to consider because different ages look at sustainability differently. Finding a way to target a group effectively will affect the success of the IMC plan. Transparency was a theme developed through looking at these factors. Consumers are more interested in transparent companies who are honest about their actions. They want to be sure they are not buying from companies that participate in greenwashing.

## SWOT Analysis

The findings of the environmental analysis led to the exploration of the situational analysis. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats will emerge when implementing sustainability. Focusing on these factors will guide the organization to success and help it understand its position before implementing this sustainable IMC plan.



## Strengths

- Younger generations are more receptive and initiative to social issues
- Increasing awareness to society
- Increased effectiveness in achieving long-term financial goals
- Rising corporate social responsibility expectations



## Weaknesses

- Political issues
- Lack of transparency leads consumers to misunderstand a company's goals
- Changing human's behaviors
- Opposing views on the future of the planet



## Opportunities

- Requiring certifications
- Incentivize sustainable actions
- Many ways to reach target market
- More education and programs



## Threats

- Government pushback
- Low concern for sustainability
- Greenwashing
- Individuals do not see a direct impact on their life

\*See SWOT Analysis breakdown in Appendix B

### Key Insights

The situational analysis provides a more specific look into what to consider when implementing sustainability. More people are aware of the importance of sustainability, but younger generations are the most receptive to it. However, even with the increased awareness, there are some groups who may not be as concerned with sustainability. It is important to keep that in mind when looking at the opportunities that sustainability brings. There are a variety of ways that sustainability can be implemented, but certifications and education stand out. These fit the external trends of consumers wanting transparency.

# Market Research.

Sustainability is an abstract and broad concept. It means something different to everyone and each target market. The goal of market research is to get a better understanding of the behaviors and thought processes of the target market. Market research will be the foundation of the recommendations provided in this sustainable IMC plan.

## Secondary Research

Secondary research was conducted to discover what the target market responds to and finds appealing in sustainability. The goal was to get to the root of what makes the target market purchase sustainably (or choose to be sustainable) and how organizations can broadly apply the findings to a generic sustainable IMC plan. Secondary research was salient because the target market options include companies, industries, individuals, and business leaders, which is not all attainable through primary research with time and availability constraints.

Companies were a focus of secondary research. Transparent companies that embrace sustainability are more likely to attract consumers, especially environmentally conscious consumers. It can help them stand out from other brands with similar products who greenwash or do not try to incorporate sustainable practices. Companies that engage in greenwashing have seen direct consequences on how customers view their products and services (Loannou et al., 2022). Brand transparency can gain consumer trust and build loyalty (Jaglowksi, 2023). One example is Clif Bar, which produces an annual CSR report detailing its commitment to people, the planet, and the community. Additionally, business leaders are a significant portion of the target market. They influence alterations within their companies and persuade industry-wide changes. Many leaders take the word sustainability lightly and use it as reputation management. Leaders need to know that it is so much more than that. Consumers will start noticing if companies start cutting corners on sustainability. Business leaders can start by implementing a sustainability report that is transparent and traceable for the consumer. This report also shows consumers initiative in trying to be sustainable.

(Reiter et al., 2020)

Industry is a vast portion of the target market. All industries could act more sustainably on their part. From using renewable energy to optimizing supply chains, there is something that all industries could do to reduce their harm to the environment. Many industries could implement acquiring hybrid equipment. This equipment would rely more on electric power rather than fossil fuels. In the long run, all industries switching to electric power will result in economies of scale.

(Reiter et al., 2020)

Individuals and business students are considered the same for this plan. According to Sheth and Parvatiyar, "environmentally sound products have commanded almost a 25% premium," and the environmentally conscious consumer is willing to pay that premium (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). Customers are willing to pay for products that will last longer and are reusable. They are also willing to pay for higher quality products for example many consumers see the benefits of organic food and will pay that high price tag. A significant amount of secondary research was found on this topic. To keep it concise there were four key insights from secondary research focusing on individuals.

1. Students do not have an accurate comprehensive definition of what sustainability is
2. Students do not buy sustainably
3. Students think they know more about sustainability than they actually do (just assume causal relationships)
4. Student's do not understand their full impact on the environment

From the gaps found within secondary research, objectives and questions were developed to further primary research, focusing on business students.

## Primary Research

Primary research was conducted both through focus groups and a survey. The primary market research process begins by formulating questions that will provide parameters and guide the research. The research questions for this sustainable IMC plan are as follows:

- **RQ1:** What motivates individuals/students to be sustainable and why should they care, both professionally and personally?
- **RQ2:** What does the target market recognize as sustainability?
- **RQ3:** What power does marketing have over our target market's consumption pattern?

The focus group was conducted to get more in-depth data deemed too complex for the survey. Business school students were used to form focus groups to represent students and future business leaders. This selection was due to constraints of time and resources; research could only be conducted with university students because of availability (see Appendix C). The groups were composed of 49 students, all between the ages of 18-22. Participants were divided into five focus groups, each answering the same questions (see Appendix D).

The focus groups lasted between 30 minutes to an hour. Each of the five focus groups were recorded, transcribed, and coded to find the overarching trends. The overarching trends seen in the data include categorizing students' perceptions and understandings as either individually driven trends or systematic/external trends.



**Systemic & External  
Driven Trends**



**Individually Driven  
Trends**

The survey was created using questions drawn from existing scales (Antil, 1984; Deloitte, 2023; Mangleburg, 2004; Stifel Institutional Group, 2021; Summers et al., 2016). The survey was emailed to 2,495 undergraduate university students, consisting of 12 questions, resulting in 124 respondents or a 6% response rate. The survey was analyzed through Qualtrics (see Appendix E).

The University's IRB approved all primary research. No identifying personal information was collected to protect the research participant's privacy.

## Data Analysis of Overarching Trends

### Individually Driven Trends

#### Navigating a Sustainable Lifestyle in College

Navigating a sustainable college lifestyle is hindered by individually driven barriers such as financial limitations, convenience, and time pressures of student life. The focus group showed that students view sustainable products as more expensive, causing them to choose the more affordable and less sustainable alternatives. Survey results show that fourteen percent of students would not pay a single penny more for a more sustainable product. Even if students want to buy sustainably, their budgets prevent them from doing so. Convenience is a crucial contributor to the college lifestyle. This fact is exemplified by students sharing that they use single-use products for ease in the focus groups. Additionally, from the focus group, a college student's lifestyle is typically busy with studying and balancing a hectic and stress-filled schedule. This lifestyle may lead to the perception that sustainability is too time-consuming and impractical to do in everyday life.

#### Emotions Motivate People to Action

Emotion is a powerful motivator for action. Individual connections to specific issues and family purchasing history can heighten awareness and drive consumption. Focus group findings showed the impact of climate change, specifically on animals, as emotionally appealing to students.

Viewing one's carbon footprint establishes a direct link between individual actions and their environmental impact, promoting a sense of personal responsibility. Additionally, people adhere to family consumption patterns, creating a feeling of loyalty to products and driving them to buy the same products or from the same companies over time. Emotion and pathos are strategic tactics to motivate consumers to act more sustainably.

### Knowledge Impacts Sustainable Behavior

Knowledge plays a significant role in shaping sustainable behavior. Individuals often draw from what they were taught in school or what they see first-hand and integrate these principles into their lives. The survey found a statistically significant relationship between the number of classes a student takes that talk about sustainability and how confident their knowledge of sustainability is ( $P=0.00262$ ). The significance of this relationship was found through a chi-square test. This relationship shows a connection between the classroom and the student's knowledge of sustainability. Establishing this relationship shows the importance of education and learning about sustainability. The focus group also found that those who opt for elective sustainability classes tend to possess a more comprehensive knowledge of sustainability. Increased confidence and education in sustainability can lead to more sustainable choices and lifestyle changes as an individual. Challenges arise when individuals accept sustainability claims at face value without conducting research or can't see their impacts with their own eyes. These challenges emphasize the need for broader education on the how and why of making eco-friendly decisions. The survey also found that students who have boycotted companies for sustainability reasons feel most confident in their knowledge of sustainability ( $P=.00434$ ). This test was run as an ANOVA, showing statistical significance. This means that students who know more about sustainability are doing more actions to promote sustainability, such as boycotting unsustainable companies to help with the environmental cause. This data shows that students need to be empowered to feel more confident in their knowledge of sustainability. This comes from education and making students feel like they know what they are talking about.

Another key finding from the focus group was the impact of social media influencers. The focus groups named many influencers, but they explained that they didn't adopt the sustainable habits promoted by these influencers. However, the students found value in the influencers' information and gained awareness of sustainability. This finding is a potential tool for companies to increase sustainability awareness through social media influencers.

### Systemic & External Driven Trends

#### My Individual Impact Does Not Make a Difference

From the focus group, it was found that students have a negative view of the impact they make on the environment. A common theme was a lack of control due to external factors. Students feel they do not have control over what they have access to. For example, many student housing landlords do not provide a recycling dumpster, so students can't recycle even if they want to. The survey also found a positive correlation between the more a student thinks their contribution to the environment is too little to be meaningful and the less they try to be sustainable in their day-to-day lives ( $P=.0066$ ).

This positive correlation shows that individuals need to be educated that their contribution is not too small to be meaningful so they feel empowered to be more sustainable in their day-to-day lives. Students are also frustrated by external factors, such as what other companies and industries are doing. Why would one student's contribution matter if an industry emits an astronomical amount of pollution? Choosing to be sustainable feels optional. There isn't a sense of urgency that people need to act on now. They feel less motivated when they can't see the impact of their actions.

### **Quality Reduces Waste and Promotes Sustainability**

In the focus group, the mention of Patagonia was a common theme. Patagonia is known for its high-quality and long-lasting products. Our focus group sees the longevity of products as a characteristic of sustainability. If more companies were to improve the quality of their products, consumers would not have to over-consume. High-quality products are easier to reuse and repair, which keeps consumers using the products for a long time and promotes sustainability. The focus group also mentioned the quality of reusable bags and how they work better than plastic bags. It also allows people to reuse the bags no matter what store they are in.

### **Companies Need to Take Responsibility for Marketing Sustainability**

Another main factor outside of student's control is what big companies do. From the focus group, many individuals mentioned that marketers are responsible for marketing sustainability and marketers have promoted overconsumption. The survey found a positive correlation between people paying attention to what others are buying and people trying to be more sustainable in their day-to-day lives. This means that students who pay attention to trends are also trying to be more sustainable. This consumer behavior makes it almost economically profitable for companies to be more sustainable. Consumers changing their behavior to be more sustainable could be related to society's general trend towards sustainability. There was a statistically significant relationship from the survey that those who factor sustainability in their choices buy from sustainable brands ( $P=.0000285$ ). This insight from the ANOVA test revealed obvious findings, but having the statistics to back up this fact is good. If brands become more sustainable, the brand will get sustainable consumers. Many companies prioritize the profit they bring in rather than their impact on the environment. An unsustainable company that came up frequently during the focus group was Shein due to its unethical practices. Customers do not have control over companies' actions or the spread of misinformation (greenwashing) about what's sustainable. If companies had more environmental impact regulations, individuals might feel empowered to be sustainable and promote sustainability. Consumers are also looking for companies providing ways for them to repair or buy refurbished items. Companies need to take action to be more sustainable because it is the changing consumer's preference and will decrease the pattern of overconsumption.

## *Key Insights*

The findings from secondary and primary helped create a better understanding of why this sustainable IMC plan will be successful in the real world. The findings prove that sustainability is essential to the target markets and is no longer a trend but a lasting consumer behavior that needs to be addressed by companies. Implementing these findings from the research will ensure that companies do not get left behind by consumers for their lack of sustainability. Organizations that implement these research findings will catalyze other companies to implement sustainability.

# Strategy

## **Educating for Earth's Future**

Through the research process, education was identified as a common theme. There is a need for more education when it comes to sustainability. The more educated everyone is on sustainability leads to more sustainable actions. The strategy for this IMC plan was positioned around the topic of education. More awareness will be drawn to the topic by finding ways to educate on sustainability.

## **Paths to Renewal**

Organizations should educate on sustainability to increase the participation of sustainable practices from society. Therefore, their efforts should be focused on transparency, finances, and creating certificates to support the pivotal education strategy. If organizations are not leading in sustainable efforts, they are making excuses for not participating. Poor environmental practices alienate consumers from organizations. Encouraging organizations to educate themselves will ensure the longevity of the planet, product, and brand. Organizations should be compelled to meet corporate social responsibility standards and become educated on how to be sustainable in a way that benefits them. The marketing industry should move towards educating consumers on the importance of sustainable consumption. Lastly, individuals and students should be educated on the market for sustainable products and the benefits of paying a higher price for a longer-lasting product. Education will be implemented through certifications, an impact tab, a product of the month, student-driven innovation, and a company report card.  
(Dudgeon, 2023)

### **Certifications**

Certifications are beneficial for an organization to implement because they show authenticated education and information. Seventy-eight percent of consumers want to buy from environmentally friendly companies but don't know how to identify them without a certificate.  
(Singh & Srivastava, 2011)

Seventy-two percent of consumers rely on third-party certifications to determine if a product is sustainable (Singh & Srivastava, 2011). The individual must know they are buying certified products that impact the environment, which gives them the feeling of being a part of a community. There are many different sustainable certifications to consider. An example of one certification is the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). This certification means the organization must uphold the GRI standards and practices for approval. The organization must do mandatory reporting where the Global Sustainability Standards Board (GSSB) is the third-party auditor. Certified B Corporation is another option organizations can be certified with. B Corp status is reserved only for organizations that practice high standards set by the B Lab certifying body. A B Corp certification aims to get organizations to be a force for environmental and social justice issues. B Corps have the intention of “balancing profit and purpose” (B Corporation, n.d). It is an ideal certification for all organizations. It is as easy as completing an Impact Assessment that questions their environmental and social performance. An organization must receive a score of 80, sign the B Corp Agreement, and pay a fee.

A university that is sustainably certified can gain international recognition for:

- ✓ Sustainable efforts
- ✓ Engage the community
- ✓ Create a baseline to continue to improve
- ✓ Make progress toward a sustainable future
- ✓ Be part of a global community of other certified higher education institutions
- ✓ Inform strategic planning and budgeting
- ✓ Integrate sustainability into teaching
- ✓ Learning and research
- ✓ Generate new ideas

Universities that are Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Reporting System (STARS) certified support education for the marketing industry and students/individuals. The goal is to engage and recognize the full spectrum of higher education institutions to implement the framework of long-term sustainability goals. Universities can be identified as leaders in the sustainability movement and attend a conference to see what other institutions are doing. Students who attend these universities will learn about how sustainable practices are beneficial and implement their learning into future marketing industry roles while reaching individuals. (Case, 2023; STARS, 2023)

### Green Check Mark

The green check marks are given to organizations and their products when they receive certifications. They will be placed on product packaging so consumers can easily spot them. In addition, the organization will be certified on their Instagram and TikTok. The green check mark will be next to the blue “verified” check mark. Research shows that the color green will increase the credibility of the organization’s certification. (Singh & Srivastava, 2011)



## Impact Tab

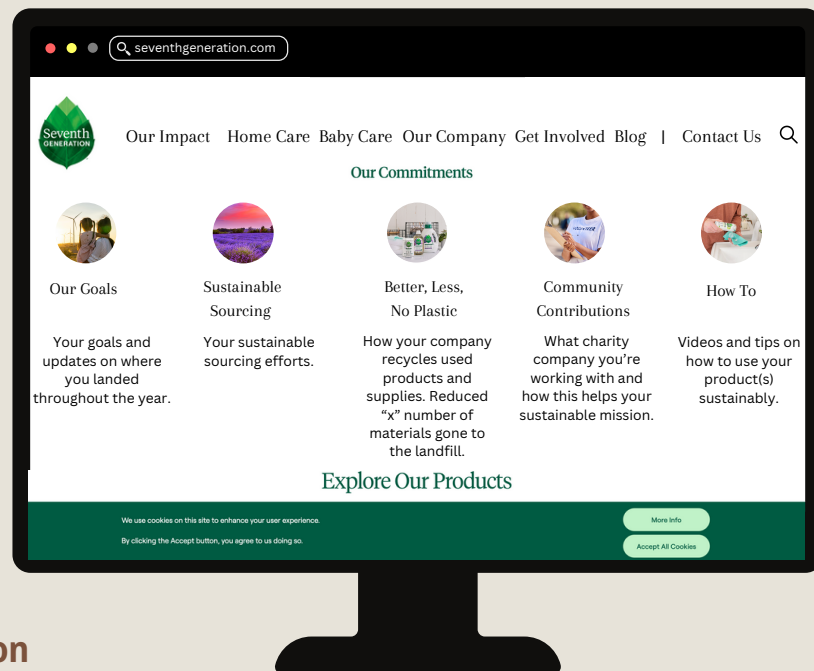
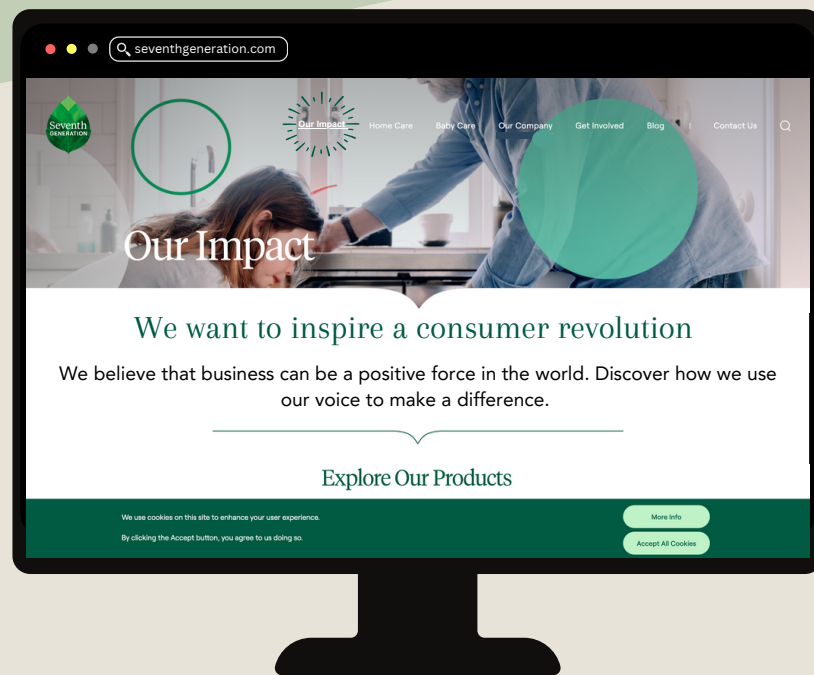
The impact tab will be a hyperlink on the organization's website located in the ribbon. The link will be labeled "Our Impact." This tab will feature statistics about the organization's business practices. These practices will feature the organization's goals, sustainable sourcing, recycling, charities they support, and a "How To" section. Informing individuals about the efforts towards building a better future will educate them in an engaging way. (Seventh Generation, n.d.)

## "How To"

The "How To" section will be an engaging experience for individuals to use as a resource easily. An individual scrolls down to the "How To" section to view the content. It will provide information such as videos and a short list of sustainable product use tips. An example of a tip is how to maximize the lifespan of the product an organization is offering.

## Student Driven Sustainability Competition

A sustainability competition hosted by academic institutions will drive student participation. Any organization can sponsor this event. The budget will allocate ten thousand dollars towards a scholarship (See Appendix F). A college student will receive the scholarship by winning a sustainability competition. The competition is open to any college student at the university. Students can work on this individually or in groups with up to four students. They must put together a sustainability campaign and event on campus and then write a summary of the event with pictures. The university must publish it to authenticate the event. The financial incentive will encourage students to participate in sustainable behaviors. Scholarship opportunities help students pay for school and allow students to implement their projects and ideas or attend conferences to learn more about their prospective cause. Implementing this scholarship competition educates students. Educating students in higher education is essential because they are the next generation's leaders. (Scholarships.com, 2023)



## Product of the Month

The product of the month is a regenerative product from a sustainably certified organization. The CEO of Impact Media, Tim Chau, will select the product of the month. Impact Media is "an award-winning digital destination for young people shaping the future," with a following of 2.4 million users on Instagram (Impact, n.d.).



Introducing the organization and their Product



Organization background



Statistics from the organization's Impact Tab

Impact Media will feature an Instagram story and a post introducing the organization, product, and environmental impact. The Instagram story will highlight the post to gain traffic. Users can click on this story and be taken to Impact's Instagram post. The Instagram posts are significant, as 54% of consumers choose to buy their products via Instagram (realnet, 2023). "Product of the Month" supports transparency by exposing individuals to products that are sustainable while educating them at the same time. The Instagram post's first slide will be the featured product and organization name. The second slide will contain background about the organization. The third slide will take statistics from the organization's "Our Impact" tab on its website. The mockup of the Instagram post was generated using Seventh Generation as an example.

## Company Report Card

The company report card is a tactic for organizations to hold vendors and suppliers to the standards of the Higg Index. The Higg Index is a common language that tracks and measures an organization's social and environmental impacts. It provides a solution, empowering manufacturers and brands to leverage verified data to measure, improve, and share their sustainability efforts continuously. The Higgs Index is used in the apparel industry but can easily be implemented to fit any industry. It can track suppliers, manufacturers' practices, and sourcing. Suppliers, vendors, and manufacturers will meet accountability, communication, and program management standards. They will be graded on where they land in each category. The main categories the report card will track are energy, waste and recycling, buildings, products and packaging, supply chain, water, food, transportation, community, and employees. Vendors and suppliers that score low on the report cards could face being dropped by an organization. The company report card educates organizations.  
(Sustainable Apparel Coalition, 2023)

# Marketing Tactics.

## Campaign: Your Footprint Still Lingers

To aid with knowledge recognition, the campaign “Your Footprint Still Lingers” shows how marketing’s influence can increase the development of sustainability within society. This campaign will remind people of the power of their individual footprints on the environment. The campaign will begin January 1st, during the first quarter of the fiscal year, and continue throughout the three-year-long sustainable IMC plan. This campaign will highlight the impact people’s consumption habits have on producing waste. This campaign also shows other marketers how they can market sustainability. The main tactic will be shadow art. The budget allows for hiring an artist to create a mountain of garbage that, with the correct lighting, reveals the shadow of a couple’s gluttonous consumption. It also includes a photographer to take high-quality pictures of the art to be placed on billboards and used in social media. This image will emphasize that even if people can no longer see their trash once discarded, it is still somewhere out there. Garbage often sits in landfills, polluting the oceans or the air, so this aims to encourage waste reduction. High-traffic areas with high consumption rates will contain billboards. The advertisement will have the words “Your Footprint Still Lingers” printed. Social media advertisements will also use these photos. These tactics will expand the advertisement’s reach using traditional and social media. Using trash to repurpose art sets an example of a regenerative practice that organizations and individuals can learn from.

# Media Channels

## Social Media

### Instagram

Instagram is a social media networking app with approximately 1.4 billion users and is the fifth most visited site globally (Connell, 2023). Advertising on this platform could reach an immense number of people. Another advantage of using Instagram is that 90% of users follow at least one business, which means that with effective advertising, there is a high probability that followers will increase (HubSpot, ca. 2020). Provided that, Instagram will also be used to advertise the “Your Footprint Still Lingers” campaign. The advertisement will be a static photo of the art piece with the words “Your Footprint Still Lingers” and a website link for more information. This tactic will help increase apprehension for responsible consumption and production by creating repeated exposure to the target audience. The budget allocates \$403,600 for Instagram advertisements throughout the three years.

### Facebook

Facebook is a social networking platform, now owned by Meta, that doubles as a website and an app on mobile devices. It currently has 2.41 billion monthly active users globally (Carmicheal, 2021). It also holds the title of the most popular social media site in America since over 70% of adults in America use the platform every single day. To be exact, 53% of all social media visits in America go to Facebook (Wong, 2023). The platform has cultivated into the ideal place for digital advertising. Many organizations use this to their advantage as it is the most used platform by marketers. The “Your Footprint Still Lingers” campaign will be presented through static advertisements to promote reduced consumption. Due to Facebook having the highest volume of users, this tactic should reach the largest audience through one advertisement. The budget allocates \$1,009,000 for Facebook advertisements throughout the three years.

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-related social media platform for networking with the business community. There are over 900 million members, with about 180 million senior-level executives and 10 million C-level executives. Not only are there many business leaders present on LinkedIn, but four out of five LinkedIn members have the power to drive business decisions (LinkedIn, 2023). This fact makes it an optimal platform to reach the business side of the target audience and get through to people who can cultivate real change at their workplaces. LinkedIn is also a platform that young business professionals use to look for jobs and network opportunities, meaning they could also be reached through it. With that being said, the “Your Footprint Still Lingers” campaign would be advertised on this platform through paid posts that will be seen in members’ feeds. LinkedIn advertisements can start, stop, and change ads at any time, ensuring that the advertisement can remain applicable throughout the three-year plan and be easily updated (LinkedIn, 2023). The budget allocates \$605,400 for the three-year plan.

## Traditional Media

### Billboard

Billboards are an effective form of traditional media because they reach a diverse audience and increase visibility. This fact is proven because 71% of people often look at the messages on roadside billboards (Olenski, 2011). Billboards are highly adaptable, allowing businesses greater flexibility in controlling their placement and reaching their target audiences. According to Forbes, outdoor advertising is harder to ignore than regular advertising, which is convenient, considering the average American spends at least an hour in their car daily (DI, 2023; Astoria, 2022). Another advantage of billboards is that they are shown 24/7, generating repeated exposure. The “Your Footprint Still Lingers” campaign will be placed as a billboard in high-traffic areas to utilize these benefits. High-traffic areas will best bring awareness to overconsumption tendencies and bring thoughts of sustainability to the forefront of the audiences’ minds. The budget allocates \$720,000 for the three years.

Example of Billboard:



### Sustainable Postcard-sized Flyers

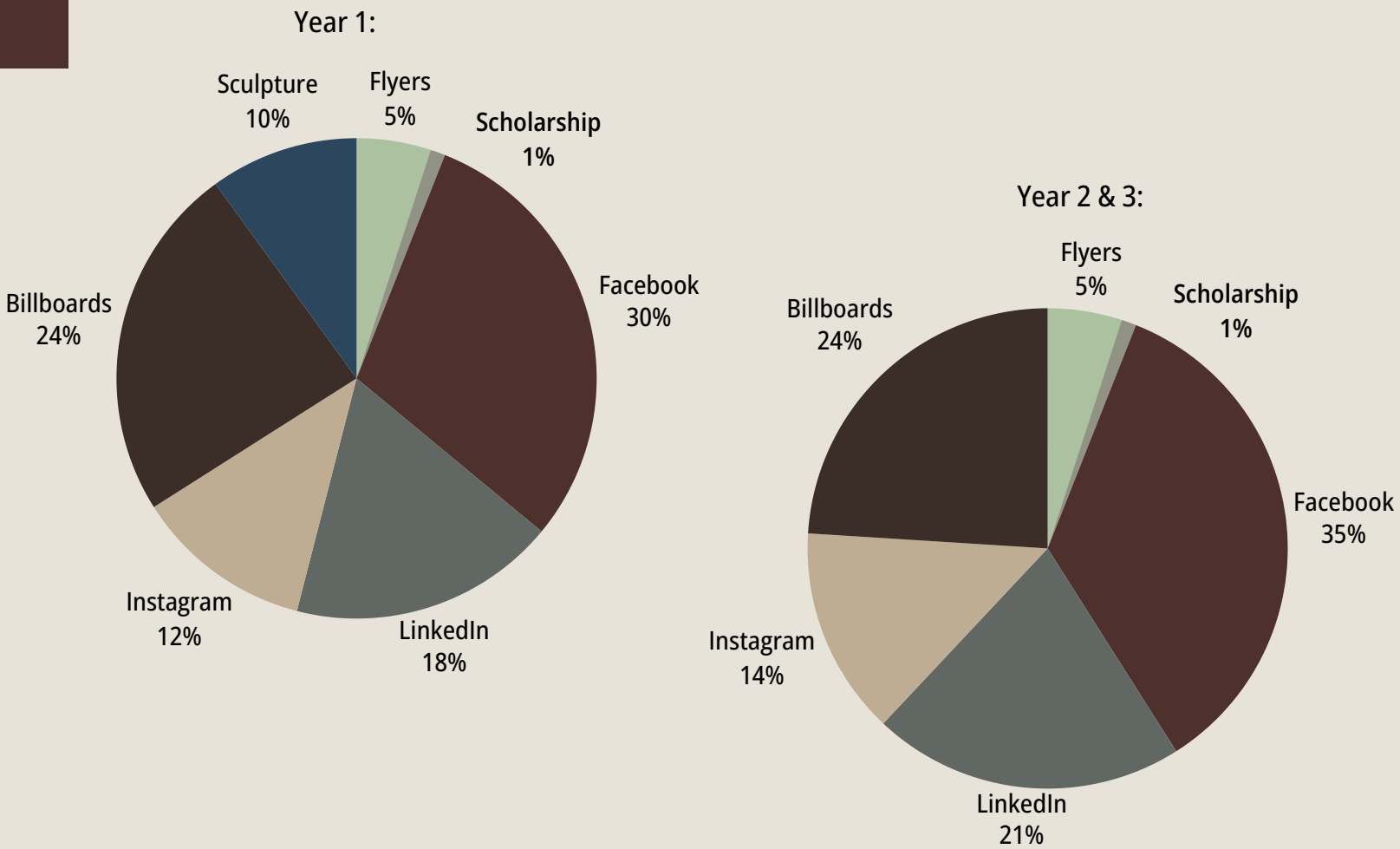
Flyers are a cost-effective and easily distributable method to inform people about sustainability. Organizations often use flyers to reach large audiences quickly and to encourage customers to act. Flyers are also measure if they include an exclusive offer or a QR code (Halder, 2023). This QR code can directly send the customer to the impact tab on the organization’s website. Additionally, the QR code information is easily tracked by how many scans it attracts, the device used, and its location. This is why the “Your Footprint Still Lingers Campaign” will take on flyer format. Flyers will allow fast knowledge dissemination and increase awareness. Organizations can implement this method by including them in every order they give to their customers.

Example of Sustainable Flyer:



Instead of using traditional flyers, this campaign will be using seed-plantable paper. These are better for the environment than standard paper, allowing the recipient to plant flowers with the flyers after reading. The unique paper used can lead to solid brand recall because of this untraditional corporate gifting. The budget allocates \$132,000 for the three-year plan.

### Budget Allocation By Percentage:



### Annual Campaign Schedule:

Media Flow Chart	January	Quarter One February	March	April	Quarter Two May	June	July	Quarter Three August	September	October	Quarter Four November	December
Events												
Student Driven Sustainability Competiton												
Social Media												
Facebook												
Instagram												
LinkedIn												
Traditional Media												
Billboards												
Seed-Plantable Flyers												

# Metrics.

## Key Performance Indicators


The three-year sustainable IMC plan aims to encourage individuals, companies, and the marketing industry to think and act more sustainably. While most sustainable strategies won't always result in tangible metrics, organizations can expect tangible benefits in certain aspects of their business. Those specific metrics will help gauge the success of this campaign. The key performance indicators are the following factors: impressions, social media engagement, and ROI. Using these metrics, the company can see the holistic benefit of sustainable practices. These key performance indicators are crucial to measure the growth of awareness regarding sustainability. Increasing awareness from the target market will measure success, which correlates with exposure. Impressions and social media engagement help monitor awareness. Through these metrics, it will reveal how successful this plan has been. This plan will cause an increase in awareness and a decrease in overconsumption and other unsustainable practices.

## Impressions

Impressions are an insightful method to monitor the impacts of the plan. An impression is the number of times a user visits an app or website page when an advertisement is displayed. This campaign's target impression share is estimated to be 60% (Tillison, 2023). The impact tab and product of the month strategies will assist in increasing the impressions for organizations. Organizations share these tactics through social media and flyers. These channels bring consumers to the organization's webpage. Implementing these strategies will cause an increase in customer awareness for the organization.

## Social Media Engagement

Monitoring social engagement will inform if the campaign brings sustainability awareness to students and individuals. Social engagement measures people's interaction with the company's social media accounts and content (Adobe Express, 2022). It is the ideal metric because it includes likes, comments, shares, replies, and direct messages. Using social engagement makes it feasible to compare social media accounts' growth over time and allows us to see the most effective tactics. The more social engagement, the more awareness increases. Companies using Facebook can expect an increase of 2% at the start of the new campaign program, 3% for Instagram, and 6% for LinkedIn (Adobe Express, 2022). Increasing social engagement can impact brand image, build relationships, and improve the customer experience (Eckstein, 2023).



A certified company will increase social media engagement for organizations because it builds credibility. Verified accounts generate thirty percent more engagement than unverified accounts (Griffis, 2023). Organizations can expect a higher engagement rate by getting the green check mark.

## Return on Investment

There are many ways to see if this sustainability approach has positively impacted organizations. ROI determines the efficiency of an investment relative to its cost. According to Forbes, 7% or greater is a good percentage for ROI (Guy Birken, 2023). Since segments of consumers are starting to care more about sustainability, there is a push for organizations to incorporate corporate social responsibility into business. There are real advantages to being a regenerative organization. “Globally, ESG leaders earned an average annual return of 12.9 percent, compared to an average 8.6 percent annual return earned by laggard companies” (Sustainable Brands, 2023). By implementing this socially sustainable IMC plan, it can be expected to generate an ROI of 12% every year.  
(Sustainable X, 2023)

# Appendix A.

## Figure 1: In-depth PESTLE Analysis

### Figure 1a. Political

#### Regulations

Regulations are one of the main constraints when implementing sustainable practices. Governments play a pivotal role in creating and enforcing regulations. The target market must work with cross-functional teams inside and outside the organization to ensure compliance. An additional challenge within sustainable practices is the need for more regulations. With clear sustainable regulations, organizations may be able to align their initiatives with an industry-wide standard.

(OECD, 2022)

### Figure 1b. Economic

#### Inflation

When inflation rises, consumers tend to lose purchasing power, causing them to make more conservative spending decisions. The consumer focus shifts from discretionary purchases to essential goods and services, which affects a consumer's choice to purchase a sustainable product over a less expensive, essential one. Organizations may also try to reevaluate their financial strategies, often cutting costs. When faced with economic pressures, o may find it difficult to allocate their resources towards sustainable practices.

(Oner, 2019)

### Figure 1c. Social

#### Age Demographics

Compared to older generations, younger generations are more conscious of sustainability topics. Baby Boomers and Generation X (Gen X) comprise the older generations. Both embody individuality, tolerance, self-absorption, self-reliance, and affluence. On the other hand, Generation Y and Generation Z (Gen Z) make up the younger generations. Both hold standards of honesty, optimism, and education. It is important to note that Gen Z shoppers are willing to spend 10% more on sustainable products because the majority state that sustainability is more important than brand name (Versace & Abssy, 2022).

# Appendix A.

## **Greenwashing**

Greenwashing has become more prevalent in organizations. In a study with 2,219 products, 98% of those products were found to engage in some form of greenwashing (Bender, 2011). Consumer behavior shows that consumers look for transparency and want to feel connected to a brand or product (National Marketing Institute, 2008). Consumers not only seek eco-friendly products but also value genuine, transparent brands. This shift in consumer preferences highlights the need for organizations to prioritize the substance of their sustainable goals, not just the appearance. Authentic shared values foster a deeper connection with consumers.  
(Dahl, 2010)

## **Figure 1d. Technological**

### **Management Tools**

Companies using sustainability management tools benefit from streamlined and efficient process management. Findings show that implementing these tools reduces environmental impacts per unit of revenue. Integration of these tools helps businesses oversee and optimize their sustainability initiatives and goals. These tools enable companies to monitor and assess their sustainable practices, which allows for a more efficient approach to environmental responsibility.  
(Hörisch et al., 2015)

### **Logistics**

Logistics are an excellent way for companies to implement sustainability. Developing circular economies, where materials are put back into use rather than discarded, is essential. It will help reduce the impact of manufacturing on climate change, mitigate waste and pollution, and reduce the nation's dependence on fossil fuels.  
(Armstrong et al., 2023)

## **Figure 1e. Legal**

### **Product labeling and Packaging laws**

A company shifting towards sustainable practices should be aware of the legal standards in their industry. Product labeling and packaging laws are in place to maintain standards throughout industries. Transparency in the packaging reaches the consumer. It states all the ingredients that a product is made of and contains.  
(MSCI, n.d.)

# Appendix A.

## **MSCI ESG Ratings**

Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Ratings aim to measure a company's management of financially relevant ESG risks and opportunities. These ratings show industry leaders and laggards. Companies should aim to be on the list of leaders.

(MSCI, n.d.)

## **FTC Guidelines**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) protects American consumers from deceptive business practices. The company's products must meet the standards to make environmental claims. Each claim made by the company needs to be backed up with scientific evidence of a minimum of 50% benefits and certifications, as these have independent standards.

(Ritchie & Jones, 2022)

## **Figure 1f. Environmental Natural Threats**

Natural resources are declining because of the everyday use of energy consumption. Worldwide oil consumption reached 97.3 million barrels per day in 2022, an increase of around three percent compared to the previous year (Sönnichsen, 2023). Burning fossil fuels has an impact on natural disasters around the world. Wildfires, floods, and extreme heat are just a few severe natural disasters worldwide in 2022. Between 2019 and 2021, the number of people who cited severe weather events increased from twenty-two percent to twenty-seven percent. Severe weather and natural disasters create ripple effects across everyday life.

# Appendix B.

## Figure 2a: In-depth SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

Younger generations are more receptive to fighting for sustainability. The company and marketing industry see the impact of their actions on the future and are ready to put their money where their mouth is by spending more on longer-lasting items, thrifting, reusing, recycling, and composting. With social media being a part of everyday life and natural disasters happening frequently, there is an increased awareness of sustainability and its practices. There are benefits to being more sustainable. Sustainable options are beneficial in the long run. Furthermore, there is rising pressure for corporate social responsibility. Every consumer wants to know that the businesses they purchase from meet ethical standards.

### Weaknesses

Humans need a push to adapt to new practices. Additionally, people have differing concerns for our environment, making it difficult to set a universal standard. The United States of America currently has few standards or laws regarding sustainability. It is hard for individuals to think they could care about an issue if the government does not. The political bias against sustainability is another weakness to consider.

### Opportunities

There are many opportunities for the target markets to become educated about sustainability. The first idea is adding more education around the topic and implementing programs. Companies and organizations could also expand their portfolios by earning sustainability certifications. Doing so would educate current and future companies, individuals, and students. Another opportunity is the ability to reach audiences. Social media is prevalent in our current society, so this method could be used to reach the chosen target market.

### Threats

Companies and organizations must be alert for some threats, one being low concern for sustainability. Individuals have different predispositions about sustainability, which makes it difficult to set a ubiquitous standard. Additionally, there has been an increase in corporations implementing inaccurate practices. These practices are mainly known as "greenwashing." Corporations caught greenwashing can face significant legal trouble. Greenwashing poses problems for individuals because they cannot differentiate between transparent companies and those that are not. Lastly, individuals may perceive that sustainability has no impact on their lives. Individuals lose motivation to practice sustainability with no immediate results from sustainable practices. Thus, they need education on how playing their part in sustainability impacts the future.

# Appendix C.

## Figure 3a: Research Limitations

Limitation: Constraints to this research include time, availability, and a socially desirable topic. Due to time constraints and availability, primary data could only be collected from the student population. This data excludes the other four target markets the plan could reach. More time was spent on secondary research to understand better the markets that were harder to study. The topic of sustainability also has some social desirability, which could cause students not to be completely honest about their survey answers. The survey was online and anonymous to attempt to mitigate the social desirability phenomenon. The anonymity of the survey was disclosed to prospective respondents.

# Appendix D.

## Figure 4a: Focus Group Questions

What does sustainability mean to you and how do you define it?

Where did you learn about sustainability?

What comes to mind when I say the word sustainability?

What are the barriers you have experienced as a student preventing you from acting sustainably?

What companies do you believe use sustainable practices, why do you think that?

Explain the outcomes of implementing or not implementing sustainable practices.

Do long-term factors affect your purchasing decisions?

What will it take to get from knowledge to action when buying sustainable products.

What are your perceptions of marketing's responsibility for consumption?

What sustainable practices do you participate in and why do you do them? Are there things you know you could do but don't.

Think back on a time when you couldn't see the immediate impact of something, were you inclined to participate in those actions? Explain?

# Appendix E.

## Figure 5: Survey Questions

Figure 5a. To what degree do you agree or disagree with the following statement

- a. I am trying to be more sustainable in my day-to-day life
  - i. Strongly agree
  - ii. Agree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Disagree
  - v. Strongly disagree
- b. I care more now about sustainability than I did a year ago
  - i. Strongly agree
  - ii. Agree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Disagree
  - v. Strongly disagree
- c. I have purchased a new brand/product specifically because of their sustainability practices
  - i. Strongly agree
  - ii. Agree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Disagree
  - v. Strongly disagree
- d. I have boycotted or stopped buying a brand/product specifically because of its sustainability (or lack thereof)
  - i. Strongly agree
  - ii. Agree
  - iii. Neutral
  - iv. Disagree
  - v. Strongly disagree

Figure 5b. When choosing between different brands, to what degree does sustainability factor into your decision making?

- a. I only buy from brands that I consider sustainable or match my values
- b. I consider sustainability alongside other factors when choosing between brands
- c. I rarely consider sustainability when choosing between brands

# Appendix E.

**Figure 5c. To make sure I'm buying the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Figure 5d. Advertising and other marketing techniques lead people to buy things they do not really need.**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Figure 5e. My individual contribution to the environment is too little to be meaningful**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Figure 5f. I am willing to be inconvenienced in order to take actions that are more environmentally friendly? (walk vs drive to campus)**

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

**Figure 5g. How confident do you feel in your knowledge of sustainability?**

- a. Confident
- b. Somewhat confident
- c. Not confident

# Appendix E.

1. Figure 5h. How many of your current classes talk about sustainability?

- a. 0
- b. 1
- c. 2
- d. 3
- e. 4+

1. Figure 5i. How much more would you be willing to pay for sustainable jeans versus its non-sustainable counterpart?

- a. \$0
- b. Under \$5
- c. \$5-\$10
- d. \$11-\$20
- e. \$21+

Figure 5j. What is your age? (multiple choice)

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-20
- c. 21-23
- d. 24-25
- e. 25+

Figure 5k. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Identify as other (text box entry)
- d. I prefer not to answer

Figure 5l. What discipline do you study?

- a. College of Business Administration (CBA)
- b. College of Arts, Social Science, and Humanities (CASSH)
- c. School of Visual and Performance Arts (VPA)
- d. College of Science and Health (CSH)
- e. School of Education (SOE)
- f. Undeclared

# Appendix F.

Figure 6a: Financial Budget Year 1

Master Budget					
Fiscal Year Start January 1	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year 1 Totals
<b>ART MEDIA</b>					
Sculpture	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$100,000.00
<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>					
Scholarship	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>					
Facebook	\$75,750.00	\$75,750.00	\$75,750.00	\$75,750.00	\$303,000.00
LinkedIn	\$45,450.00	\$45,450.00	\$45,450.00	\$45,450.00	\$181,800.00
Instagram	\$30,300.00	\$30,300.00	\$30,300.00	\$30,300.00	\$121,200.00
<b>TRADITIONAL MEDIA</b>					
Billboards	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$240,000.00
Pamphlets	\$11,000.00	\$33,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44,000.00
<b>TOTAL (all quarters)</b>	<b>\$322,500.00</b>	<b>\$244,500.00</b>	<b>\$221,500.00</b>	<b>\$211,500.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>
<b>Year 1 Budget Allowance</b>	\$1,000,000.00			<b>Year 1 Remaining</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

Figure 6b: Financial Budget Year 2

Master Budget					
Fiscal Year Start January 1	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year 1 Totals
<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>					
Scholarship	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>					
Facebook	\$88,250.00	\$88,250.00	\$88,250.00	\$88,250.00	\$353,000.00
LinkedIn	\$52,950.00	\$52,950.00	\$52,950.00	\$52,950.00	\$211,800.00
Instagram	\$35,300.00	\$35,300.00	\$35,300.00	\$35,300.00	\$141,200.00
<b>TRADITIONAL MEDIA</b>					
Billboards	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$240,000.00
Pamphlets	\$11,000.00	\$33,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44,000.00
<b>TOTAL (all quarters)</b>	<b>\$247,500.00</b>	<b>\$269,500.00</b>	<b>\$246,500.00</b>	<b>\$236,500.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>
<b>Year 2 Budget Allowance</b>	\$1,000,000.00			<b>Year 2 Remaining</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

Figure 6c: Financial Budget Year 3

Master Budget					
Fiscal Year Start January 1	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year 1 Totals
<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>					
Scholarship	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00
<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b>					
Facebook	\$88,250.00	\$88,250.00	\$88,250.00	\$88,250.00	\$353,000.00
LinkedIn	\$52,950.00	\$52,950.00	\$52,950.00	\$52,950.00	\$211,800.00
Instagram	\$35,300.00	\$35,300.00	\$35,300.00	\$35,300.00	\$141,200.00
<b>TRADITIONAL MEDIA</b>					
Billboards	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$240,000.00
Pamphlets	\$11,000.00	\$33,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$44,000.00
<b>TOTAL (all quarters)</b>	<b>\$247,500.00</b>	<b>\$269,500.00</b>	<b>\$246,500.00</b>	<b>\$236,500.00</b>	<b>\$1,000,000.00</b>
<b>Year 3 Budget Allowance</b>	\$1,000,000.00			<b>Year 3 Remaining</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

(DeVault & Rico, 2023; Heiler, n.d.; Custom Earth, n.d.; Vavo Digital Influencer Marketing, 2023)

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