

2009 CASE V Awards Program Entry

Title of entry: Most Improved Alumni/ Institution Magazine

Purdue University College of Liberal Arts *THiNK Magazine*

Category number and title: 7c. Most Improved Alumni/Institution Magazine, 10,000 FTE and up.

Institution: Purdue University; College of Liberal Arts

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Names of all individuals responsible for entry:

Suzanne Shaw, Director of Purdue Creative Services
John J. Contreni, Justin S. Morrill Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Barbara Dixon, Associate Dean for Administration, College of Liberal Arts
Kristal Arnold, Managing editor emerita
Cheryl Glotzbach, Senior designer
Grant Flora, Contributing writer, editor, marketing consultant

General description of the entry:

The Purdue University College of Liberal Arts introduced its redesigned semi-annual publication as *THiNK Magazine* in spring 2008 as part of a comprehensive rebranding program.

In its new iteration as *THiNK* — in content, design, typography, photography, and even paper selection — the redesigned liberal arts magazine drew immediate attention from key constituencies for its fresh contemporary look and feel.

The redesign is simple yet sophisticated, involving clean typography, provocative photography, rich color accents, and smart use of white space. Additional dramatic differences include switching from coated to uncoated environmentally friendly paper, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and changing to a square format with a perfect-bound spine.

The revitalized magazine also offers the college a forum for growing and communicating the CLA brand as “differentiated” and “sophisticated” in keeping with responses from focus groups and surveys.

Goals and objectives of the project:

The College of Liberal Arts initiated the *THiNK Magazine* redesign project as a key part of its strategic plan to raise awareness of the college at a time of dramatic, dynamic growth. The project was engaged following extensive conversations with readers, students, faculty, and alumni about the value of a liberal arts education via surveys, focus groups, telephone calls, on-campus meetings, and numerous brainstorming sessions.

As a highly regarded research land-grant university, Purdue is traditionally known for its excellence in engineering, science, technology, and agriculture among other things, and yet the College of Liberal Arts’ enrollment is the highest on campus.

The magazine set out to cover the college’s 12 academic departments and 17 interdisciplinary programs and mirror its diverse spectrum of teaching and research. Raising the college’s profile and key constituencies’ awareness of its top quality programs, faculty, and students helps attract more top scholars — and more development dollars — to the college.

All other collateral material and Web projects now echo the bold new look and message regarding liberal arts’ relevance and significance in general and for the university’s students in the sciences and engineering, as well the college’s own disciplines.

Description of how project fits into overall institutional and/or advancement goals:

THiNK Magazine’s central mission as the primary communication vehicle for the college is raising awareness of and publicizing the contributions of the College of Liberal Arts at Purdue.

Articles and features reflect the college’s mission of bringing the arts, humanities, behavioral sciences, and social sciences to bear on critical, contemporary issues and the grand challenges of our times. In short, *THiNK* makes readers think.

As such, it quickly became a must-read forum for key constituencies and a source of pride for alumni, faculty, administrators, students and their parents, and current and potential donors.

This investment in the college's brand and publication reinvention allowed for valuable repeat messaging as the college's primary marketing vehicle. It thereby laid the groundwork for follow-up donor calls and solicitations. By increasing visibility of the College of Liberal Arts brand, the college enhanced readers' affinity and loyalty to their college with the goal of increasing their involvement and giving.

Students perceive the magazine as a professional development tool too, as a potential source of contacts and employment opportunities.

Audience: Alumni, donors, professors, CLA juniors, CLA seniors, CLA graduate current and prospective students and their parents, peer institutions, legislators, and Purdue staff, faculty members, and administrators. This publication reaches readers at the state, national and international levels.

Total number of professional and support staff who worked on the program; please note the use of freelancers, outside agencies or volunteers:

Purdue Marketing and Media's Creative Services and its precursor (Purdue Marketing Communications) staffed the project with a managing editor, senior designer, a production coordinator, and contributing writers, editors, and photographers. Creative Services also arranged for freelance writers, if needed, and submitted bids for printing to outside vendors.

College of Liberal Arts faculty members and administrators also contributed articles. The College of Liberal Arts provided editorial input and final approvals. Over the course of the first three editions of *THiNK*, the core Creative Services team averaged about 14 members, minus the outside printer.

Program budget and unit costs where applicable. Do not include staff salaries or postage in calculating total cost and cost per unit.

Initially, the College of Liberal Arts brand reinvention with the concurrent *THiNK Magazine* redesign was considered an investment without a strict budget limitation. At its highest circulation level, the fall 2008 issue unit cost was .93 cents for 59,105 copies. Total cost for the past year was \$117,950. Efforts are underway to increase marketing efficiencies, refine the mailing list, and explore ways to reduce overall costs.

Documented results, measurements of effectiveness:

With its first appearance, *THiNK Magazine* received kudos from a wide spectrum of readers. It has been well received to the point where the College of Liberal Arts is looking for a way to increase frequency at a time of system-wide budget constraints. A sampling of comments below, anecdotally supports the success of the premise of the project, its execution, and its anticipated results.

I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed reading the first issue of THiNK. In the past, I've only glanced through the pages of the CLA magazine, reading a few paragraphs that were about someone I knew. Not this time. From the non-glare paper to the great photography, to the very interesting articles (the pieces on Anatolia and the story about Dr. Raskin's work in humor come easily to mind), this issue captured my attention. I'm already looking forward to learning more about my colleagues' work in the upcoming editions.

Dave Ertner
Associate Professor
Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences
Purdue University

"Once in a blue moon" a publication arrives in our mailbox that is so attractive, its photography so enticing, and its articles so interesting and varied that I stand in the middle of the front hall and slowly turn every page. I was attracted as if by a magnet to THiNK Magazine. Even its paper feels different from other publications. Thanks to you and your staff for a beautiful reminder of the excitement and the creativity of the liberal arts — and of our College of Liberal Arts.

Betty Nelson
Dean of Students Emerita
Purdue University

I just wanted to send an enthusiastic virtual pat on the back for the new Liberal Arts magazine THiNK! My wife and I both hold degrees from CLA, and we were very, very impressed by the design and content of the magazine. Even the selection of paper was commendable! If this magazine is an indicator of things to come, the future of Liberal Arts at Purdue looks very bright.

Tom Walsh
BA 1997, Fine Arts/Psychology
Web Systems Director
Hohmann & Barnard Inc.
West Lafayette, Indiana

Just wanted to congratulate you on the redesign of your liberal arts magazine. I just received a copy, and it's beautiful both to look at and listen to. A big tip of the hat to the editors, designers, writers, and everyone else who had a hand in it. Really one of the nicest makeovers I've ever seen.

David Raney
Director of Publications
Emory College
Atlanta, Georgia