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Major: Psychology

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Project Title: Inquiry Into Student Life Motivation and Participation

Project Description

As the Promotions Director for West Virginia Radio of Clarksburg, I am regularly in a position of trying to understand what motivates people. Often, the question is specifically in regards to what motivates a listener to come to one of our events, or rather what causes them to NOT come to our events.

Is it the incentive? Our stations give away prizes regularly, but only some prizes are picked-up by the winners, while others are endlessly recycled until they expire. I question whether it is the prize itself, or is it the price-point of the prize.

Is it perhaps the timing or location? Maybe the event is at the same time as another local event, or perhaps it is because it is too far for a listener to consider driving to the event.

Perhaps the listeners are just not interested in the subject of the event, so they make no effort to come out, regardless of the prizes we are offering.

Similarly with the school, is there a greater turn-out for events that offer incentives, such as t-shirts to the students who come, as opposed to the events that offer no particular incentive? Does a certain price-point for incentives have to be met before a student is willing to participate? Or are there other motivations behind participation such as convenience, timing, or interest?

Could it be something else completely, such as life demands for non-traditional students, or feeling a lack of school spirit?

My desire with this research project is to view this problem from those different angles. I would like to analyze the data from my workplace to see if there is a preliminary answer to the question of “How much incentive is enough incentive?” I would also like to analyze any data that the school currently has on the campus events, especially those which offered incentives for attendance.

I would then like to create a multi-page survey to ask the student population questions in regards to the reasons they may or may not participate in events, what could be changed to increase their participation, and their thoughts on what they would like from their student life experience. I plan to utilize both face-to-face surveys on campus, and an electronic survey to try to reach as many students as possible.

I hope to then take all the data that I’ve accumulated to determine if there is a beneficial course of action described that can be put into action.

There are a number of previous studies in the same field regarding marketing, attendance, incentive. The following are just a few:


My research in this area would support **Strategic Goal 5**: Create a student life environment that enhances participation in campus events. By gaining more information on the motivation of a sample of the student population, I hope to provide answers for a more beneficial implementation of this strategic goal in future years.