Master of fine arts degree programs marketing and communication programs

Araya Srikanlayanabuth
Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Fine and Applied Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts

Master of Fine Arts Degree Programs
Marketing and Communication Programs
(Demonstration Project)

Araya Srikanlayanabuth
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APPROVALS

Professor R. Roger Remington

date 4/12/87

Professor Robert P. Keough

date 7/17/87

Professor Joe A. Watson

date 7/17/87

Professor Philip Bornarth, Special Assistant to the Dean for Graduate Affairs

date 8/21/87

Dr. Robert H. Johnson, Dean, College of Fine and Applied Arts

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date 7/17/87
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PREFACE

The body of this thesis is divided into three parts.

Part one contains a marketing proposal and plan, the introduction to the problem and objectives of the marketing program, research, and its results. It also includes creative concepts with plans and strategies concerning images, impact statements and media.

Part two consists of some design observations and some translations of creative concepts to visual images.

Part three contains the final design publications.
THESIS PROPOSAL

The purpose of this thesis will be an attempt to solve a graphic design problem which will be an effort to produce a creative marketing and communication program. In this demonstration project, I intend to develop a set of publications to promote the Master of Fine Arts Degree Programs at the College of Fine and Applied Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology.
INTRODUCTION

Master of Fine Arts degree programs are offered at the College of Fine and Applied Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology in eleven particular areas of study: ceramics and ceramic sculpture, glass, metalcrafts and jewelry, weaving and textile design and woodworking and furniture design in the School for American Craftsmen, graphic design, computer graphic design, industrial and interior design, medical illustration, painting and printmaking in the School of Art and Design.

The objectives of the program are to offer a program of graduate study for artists, craftsmen, teachers and designers to improve their understanding and skills in design, materials and processes, and to allow for choices in personal expression and extend career opportunities.

The Master of Fine Arts degree is normally earned in two years of full-time study with the completion of a minimum of 90 credit hours on proficiency levels (B average). The requirements also include the presentation of an acceptable thesis: a show of an original body of work, and a written report illustrated with photographs of the work. Approval of the thesis is required by the Thesis Committee and the Dean of the College of Fine and Applied Arts.
Students who hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university are admitted to the program upon recommendation of the graduate admissions committee which examines transcripts, references, a portfolio and a statement of purpose. The committee proposes appropriate action to the Dean.

In the admission process, correspondence between the student and RIT will be conducted through the Admissions Office, according to the following procedures:

1. Inquiries about, and applications for, graduate study are directed to the Director of Admissions, Rochester Institute of Technology.

2. The Admissions Office will acknowledge the inquiry or application, instructing the student as to the information required by the school or department to which he or she is applying before the admission can be made.

3. Once a student has made formal application, the Admissions Office will prepare an applicant folder for him or her. All correspondence and admission data will be collected by the Admissions Office, and placed in the applicant's folder. The applicant file folder will include an RIT application, previous college and secondary school records, applicable test scores, recommendations and other documents that may support the admission of the candidate.
4. When all relevant admission data has been received, the applicant's folder will be sent to the appropriate school or department for action.

5. When a school or department has made a decision on the application, this decision and the applicant's folder will be returned to the Admissions Office.

6. The Admissions Office will notify the student of the admission decision.

7. Academic department may informally advise non-matriculated students, but no formal program of study can be approved prior to matriculation.

8. The formal program will be laid out by the dean's designee (department head, coordinator or program director, etc.) and is the one that must be followed by all students applying for admission or readmission.

In most cases, the correspondence between the student and RIT or the school is done by mail. Efficient publications of RIT and of the school sent to the applicant will stimulate the interest of the applicant, create a good impression, and play a very important role in the decision making of the applicant. It is logical and understandable that the applicants to the School of Fine and Applied Arts, who are artists, designers and craftsmen, would expect the publications from the school to be well designed rather than mere bearers of information. The distribution of publications should also be planned
wisely to ensure more success. At present, the College of Fine and Applied Arts needs these publications. This effort should be made to help other efforts to accomplish more applicants and more students to the programs.
MARKETING PROPOSAL AND PLAN

A. Marketing and Advertising Objectives
B. Marketing and communication research (questionnaire)
C. Target audiences
D. Media
E. Impacts
F. Images
G. Creativity
A. Marketing and Advertising Objectives

The overall aim of the marketing effort is to promote the
Master of Fine Arts degree programs of the College of Fine
and Applied Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology. This
effort by the College of Fine and Applied Arts is designed to
reinforce other efforts intended to proliferate a successful
admissions process. The expected accomplishment of this
effort is that it would encourage more students to participate
in the program in the future.

The advertising goals of the marketing program can be
divided into two parts:
1. The primary demand is to create a good impression and an
awareness of the Master of Fine Arts degree programs and,
to stimulate the demand and interest of the target audience.
2. The selective demand is to inform the audience with both
general and specific information and enable it to obtain
additional information easily.
B. Marketing and communication research

To obtain the adequate data, a survey questionnaire, comprised of involved questions about target audiences and the Master of Fine Arts degree program, was developed. This questionnaire contains sixteen questions which were designed for the main purpose of collecting data that would be useful in the design process.

This questionnaire method was utilized to gather data from first and second year graduate students at the College of Fine and Applied Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology in 1986-1987. Eighty questionnaires were distributed on December 5, 1986 through mail folders. Completed questionnaires were collected between December 6, 1986 and January 12, 1987. Forty eight questionnaires (sixty percent) were returned.

Other researches were done by interviewing the associate dean of College of Fine and Applied Arts, Dr. Peter Giopulos and by gathering information from the existing materials of College of Fine and Applied Arts and Rochester Institute of Technology.

The result and analysis were divided into four parts; target audiences, media, impacts and images.
Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of the research for the graduate thesis in graphic design entitled: the Marketing and Communication Program for the Master of Fine Arts Degree Programs. The objective of this demonstration project is to develop new publications to promote the Master of Fine Arts degree programs at College of Fine and Applied Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire will provide useful information that will help me toward that goal.

Please return the completed questionnaire to my mailfolder (FADC-6: Srikanlayanabuth, A.). Your time and attention will be greatly appreciated.

Araya Srikanlayanabuth

________________________________________

1. Your Major: ____________________________

2. Age: _________________________________

3. Where were you living when you applied to RIT?

________________________________________

4. What were you doing before you came to RIT

   _____ A. artist

   _____ B. designer
_____ C. craftsman  _____ D. teacher  
_____ E. other (______________) 

5. Had you already a specific major in mind before you applied to RIT?  
_____ Yes  _____ No 

6. After you received the information from CFAA, did it make you change your mind about your major?  
_____ Yes  _____ No 

7. Your first information about RIT was from ...

_____ A. a friend  _____ B. a teacher  
_____ C. an article  _____ D. a direct mail  
_____ E. other RIT publications 

8. What did you get from CFAA when you applied?  

_____ A. RIT Graduate Study Brochure  
_____ B. CFAA Brochure  
_____ C. Graduate Art Education Poster  
_____ D. MFA Degree Leaflet  
_____ E. Poster, brochure or leaflet about your department  
_____ F. other (__________________________________) 

9. To you, how important was it that those material be well designed?  

_____ A. very important  
_____ B. important  
_____ C. not necessary 

10. Do you feel you had adequate information?
11. The overall quality of the information you received from CFAA was...
   ____ A. very good
   ____ B. fair
   ____ C. poor

12. The overall design quality of the materials you received from CFAA was...
   ____ A. very good
   ____ B. fair
   ____ C. poor

13. What are the two most important reasons that made you choose CFAA at RIT?
   ____ A. location
   ____ B. program
   ____ C. its renown
   ____ D. faculty
   ____ E. equipment
   ____ F. other

14. What is the image of CFAA to you?
   ____ A. high-tech
   ____ B. practical
   ____ C. creative
   ____ D. artistic
   ____ E. colorful
   ____ F. theoretical
   ____ G. other (________________________)

15. What do you think the image of CFAA should be?
   ____ A. high-tech
   ____ B. practical
   ____ C. creative
   ____ D. artistic
   ____ E. colorful
   ____ F. theoretical
   ____ G. other (________________________)

16. What do you expect from earning MFA degree?
   ______________________________________
Questionnaire results

Ages of the target audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 - 25</td>
<td>33.34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30</td>
<td>29.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 35</td>
<td>27.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 40</td>
<td>2.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 - 45</td>
<td>2.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 50</td>
<td>6.25 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The place of residence when they applied to RIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>31.25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>29.17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other State</td>
<td>10.41 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other country</td>
<td>10.41 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The career before coming to RIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>designer</td>
<td>33.34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>18.74 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>artist</td>
<td>16.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>16.67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>craftsman</td>
<td>8.34 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>8.34 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Major chosen according to the previous career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continue</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>68.75 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Target audiences had specific majors in mind before they applied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes</th>
<th>100 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>95.83 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target audiences changed their minds about their majors after receiving information from CFAA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>yes</th>
<th>4.17 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>95.83 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first information about CFAA

- a friend: 37.51 %
- a teacher: 27.08 %
- an article: 20.83 %
- other RIT materials: 10.41 %
- a direct mail: 4.17 %

Materials received from CFAA

- RIT Graduate Study Brochure: 62.58 %
- MFA Degree Leaflet: 54.17 %
- CFAA Brochure: 31.25 %
- Department Material: 18.75 %
The importance of the design of the publications from CFAA

- very important: 62.50%
- important: 35.42%
- not necessary: 2.08%

Information received was adequate

- no: 56.25%
- yes: 43.75%

Quality of the information

- fair: 75.00%
- very good: 16.67%
- good: 6.25%
- poor: 2.08%

Quality of the design

- fair: 64.58%
- very good: 18.75%
- good: 14.59%
- poor: 2.08%

The most important reasons they chose CFAA

- program: 84.34%
- its renown: 33.34%
- location: 31.25%
- equipment: 18.75%
According to target audiences images of CFAA are

- practical: 77.08%
- high-tech: 52.33%
- creative: 33.34%
- theoretical: 25.00%
- other: 8.34%

According to target audiences, images of CFAA should be

- creative: 87.50%
- artistic: 54.17%
- practical: 52.08%
- high-tech: 45.83%
- theoretical: 37.50%
- colorful: 14.58%
- other: 4.17%

Expectation from earning MFA degree

- to gain better understanding: 35.58%
- to be able to teach: 33.34%
- to get better job: 27.08%
C. Target Audiences

The Master of Fine Arts degree is the terminal degree in the professional areas and is presented as proof of a high level of professional competence in the visual arts. According to that fact, the Master of Fine Art Degree Programs would cover a wide variety of target audiences. The main group is the people in art, design and craft careers who hold a baccalaureate degree in a field of the arts with a major concentration in art, art education, or industrial arts education with the smaller group in other fields. The program prepares artists, designers and craftsmen to operate their own studios and shops, to work in business and industry and to teach at the college level.

The finding from the research indicates that the age of target audiences lies between 20 and 30 years old. In the previous year, more than half of them were from New York State with the same amount of students from other states and other countries. Most of them already had specific majors in mind before they applied to RIT. Their first knowledge about the College of Fine and Applied Arts came from teachers and friends with only ten percents from the college's materials, and, according to this target group, the quality (of both design and information) of those materials was just fair.
Places where target audiences might be reached:

1. Educational institutions.
2. Private studios or shops.
3. Private homes.
4. (Art, design and craft) professional organizations and conferences.
5. Industry.
D. Media

Media which are now in use among colleges and universities to promote their programs could be divided into two major kinds. Direct media is the media sent directly from the college or university to a student. Many kinds of publications such as brochures, books and photography are normally used. In some programs this kind of media might include slides or a computer disk. Indirect media is that used by the public for the chance that the target audience might come across it. Most of these are posters and magazine ads.

The media that will be best utilized to transmit the message to the market in this case is the same as that mentioned above. Since RIT uses the rolling admissions procedure, this media should be designed to enable year-round distribution. A Four-step contact is proposed for media strategy coordinating with advertising objectives and the admissions process (see page 4).

First contact is for the primary demand (see page 8):

1. magazine ad
2. (public) poster

Second contact is for the selective demand (see page 8):

1. brochure
2. RIT materials and application form
3. direct mail poster

Third contact is for both demands:

1. department leaflet
2. application form

Fourth contact is for the applicant that is accepted to the program:

1. personal attention letter
2. congratulation card
E. Impacts

From the marketing research, the most persuasive reason that target audiences use to choose the College of Fine and Applied Arts is the program itself (see page 15); it means their decisions are realistic and base on appropriate reasons. From this analysis, it is reasonable to assume that the appeal which will be utilized as the motivating force to stimulate and persuade target audiences is regional appeal. But since there is also a high percentage of emotional impact and expectation (see page 15), it is appropriate to use emotional appeal as a minor impact. These appeals will be translated to the copy and images in the projected publications.
F. Images

As shown by the marketing research, target audiences feel that the present image of the program is not effective enough. From the study, the two strongest images of the program indicated by target audiences are high technology and practicality. It is agreed that both are appropriate, but as a result of the study, it was shown that target audiences feel that it would be more effective if the program also had creative and artistic images. These images; creativity, artistry, practicality and high technology, will serve as the key words in the design process.
G. Creativity

In viewing graphic design as the process of problem-solving, I see the consequence of a problem as prevalent. First, the nature of the problem should be inspected, studied and understood. Each problem has its own character; there is no "perfect" solution that can be applied to solve every problem. Each solution is, more or less, the result of research. This "fact", when properly used, illuminates the "what" of the problem and at the same time, implies the appropriate way(s) to solve the problem.

The marketing and communication program is the kind of project that needs a very functional solution. It is reasonable to process it systematically. For this thesis, the problem has been pinpointed and defined since the beginning, the overall aim and the expected accomplishments were also definite (see page ). The marketing and advertising objectives led to the study of the target audiences, their ages, educations, expectations, etc. Through the questionnaire, target audiences were used as the main resource for needed data. This questionnaire and other research, which was conducted in a very limited time, are an attempt to uncover needed facts and prove what was already suspected. Images, impacts, media and this creativity were planned and relied firmly upon the results and analysis of the research.
From the finding, key words which will provide the visual images the effective quality to fulfill the marketing objectives are creativity, artistry, practicality and high technology. In order to create the awareness of the (Master of Fine Arts degree) programs, the transmission of these images must be forceful and continual. The approach that seems appropriate and feasible to meet this requirement is an identity or unified system. All the publications will be designed to blend with each other to form one strong image of the programs.

1. Copy and Text
The headline or the slogan for the promotion is "the Master of Fine Arts degree, the final step to professionalism". This emotional appeal headline would capture the interest of the viewers and at the same time communicate the main purpose of the program. It also allows the text to provide information and facts about the program.

2. Identification
To promote the program, the "brand" name should be established for the purpose of remembrance. 'MFA at RIT' is the chosen name to be promoted. The name is effortless to remember both from hearing and seeing, it also looks and sounds symmetrical which, in depth, represents the formal aspect of study in the graduate programs. The establishment of this name would benefit both in the short and long term.
In the short term it would help unify the elements of the publications together. In the long term, after some periods of promotion it would develop a social awareness.

3. Format
All publications will share the same structure: the name "MFA at RIT" at the top, College of Fine and Applied Arts at the right, the headline and text at the bottom with the images at the center to capture interest. Elements will be harmonized on the constructional grid that will be designed for all publications. This constructional grid is used to ensure a very strong format even though each publication has a different composite unit grid.

4. color
Color must function semantically, syntactically and pragmatically. Many colors from both cool and warm tones will be used. The principle in choosing colors is based strictly on the four key words. This regional representation, gives the publications an interesting and personal look, and at the same time, conceptually announces the images of the program.
Publications of the design project

1. magazine ad
2. (public) poster
3. MFA degree program information (direct mail) poster
4. graduate brochure cover
5. format for department material
NOTES AND SKETCHES

The sketches on the following pages are the development of an image that will be used for a magazine ad, public poster, mail poster and graduate bulletin cover.

This image is used as the center of interest. It works as a tool to attract viewers' eyes at first glance. Development of this image is an effort to translate four key words which represent the Master of Fine Arts degree programs; creativity, artistry, practicality and high technology. Since the programs cover many aspects of art, design and crafts, a development of an illustration that could represent them all will take a long period of time and the result will be hard to evaluate. A feasible solution that is suitable for both time and subject is the use of typography. The upper case letters; M, F and A, which are the abbreviation for the Master of Fine Arts degree programs, act very appropriately as a visual solution.

The main idea in developing the image is using large type with a dimensional mix. Large type always gives a surprise effect. The curiosity of viewers is provoked when they encounter a word that is too large to ignore. This visual solution is also made intentionally ambiguous by using two-dimensional objects interacting with three-dimensional objects. The image is made stronger by applying a potent
graphic tool; bright colors. Many colors in both warm and cool tones are chosen to enrich the psychological impact and emotional effects. These bright artistic colors provide a sense of hope and expectation. This mix of large types, dimension and bright colors would gives a very strong effect of getting viewers' attention. These three elements then work together to stimulate interest to read the text.
stage 1:
stage 2:
stage 3:
stage 4:
stage 5:
The sketches in the following pages are the examples of the images that will be used on the cover of the department brochures. (These are images for the department of graphic design and the department of medical illustration.)

Development of these images follow the idea of using typography as a visual solution.
stage 1:
stage 2:
The following page shows the constructional grid (in red) and the composite unit grid for a magazine ad.
The following page shows the constructional grid (in red) and the composite unit grid for a public poster.
The following page shows the constructional grid (in red) and the composite unit grid for a brochure cover and department material.
The following page shows the constructional grid (in red) and the composite unit grid for a mailed poster.
FINAL DESIGN PUBLICATIONS

Page 46: magazine ad
Page 47: public poster
Page 48: direct mail poster (front side)
Page 49: direct mail poster (back side)
Page 50: graduate brochure cover
Page 51: department material (front cover)
Page 52: department material (cover)
Page 53: department material
The MFA Degree... the final step to professionalism.

The Master of Fine Arts degree is the terminal degree in the professional areas of art education and the fine arts. The MFA degree is intended to provide the artist, designer, or practicum teacher with the tools and techniques necessary to achieve a high level of professional expertise. The degree is awarded to those who complete a thesis, a major project in the studio arts, or a professional practice project. The program is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the arts, as well as the ability to create and critically evaluate works of art.
Department of Graphic Design

Graphic design is solving visual problems creatively. From posters and brochures to packaging and television ads, graphic design organizes visual imagery.

You will learn to achieve visual solutions in print, three-dimensional projects and audio-visual presentations through the program's emphasis on the development of your own creativity.

Although the graphic design program stresses a systematic approach to design through formal theory and practical exercises, it does not advocate any one style of design. You are helped to produce design for your own clients and to develop your own style.

Business, government, schools, non-profit organizations and other employers of graphic design are looking for articulate people who can communicate their ideas through visual means.

You will be taught to make recommendations for problem solving, to interview clients about their goals, to complete a visual solution and to make a public presentation of the idea.

In computer graphic courses you learn to use the computer as a tool in creating multiple solutions to a problem, as in preparing unique graphic images.

You will make photostats, manipulate photographs and experiment with type in the Media Resource Center. Darkrooms are equipped with vertical cameras and photocopy stands, and typesetting equipment is available.

For more information:

Rochester Institute of Technology
Department of Graphic Design
College of Fine and Applied Arts
One Lomb Memorial Drive
Rochester, New York 14623
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions emanating from the results of the analysis show that in order to achieve the marketing and communication goals, effective images of the Master of Fine Arts degree programs must be established. In order to create those images, a systematic step by step approach was used. Through the scope of design publications, the design process was carried out on the basis of the findings produced by the investigation.

This demonstration project was done with a very limited amount of time and resources. It was suggested for the real project in the future (on the marketing and communication program for the Master of Fine Arts degree programs) to do more research on the influence of the publications received from the school by the prospective student. Relevant additional information about competitors should be gathered and more study on effective media should also be undertaken.

Academically, this demonstration project is an example of the ways to solve a graphic design problem. It is recommended for similar projects in the future that effort should be made to produce reliable data, and that design process should firmly translate the analysis of that data into visual solutions.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


