**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Online Advertising Case Study**

*Directions: Read the case study and reflect on how the FHNtoday staff planned and executed its advertising strategy.*

1. As you read, annotate the article according to the following system:

* Underline how the FHNtoday staff manages its advertising strategy.
* Highlight benefits of the FHNtoday advertising strategy.
* Put an exclamation point (!) next to anything that surprises you and explain WHY in the margin next to that paragraph.
* Put a question mark (?) next to anything you are unsure about or would like to discuss with others and explain WHY in the margin next to that paragraph.

***Background***

Jake Chiarelli, editor-in-chief of digital media for FHNtoday during the 2014-2015 school year, shared background information and answered questions about the publications at Francis Howell North in Saint Charles, Missouri. There are 1800 students at the school and about 90-100 of them participate on the staffs of five publications, including yearbook, news magazine, broadcast, a conglomerate website (FHNtoday.com) and a sports website (FHNgameday.com).

The website has been active since 2005 and was started when a student asked adviser Aaron Manfull if he could start a website. Like all staff decisions, the student created a plan and the staff made it happen. Every month, the staff sits down to evaluate its work and the health of the website over the previous month, including which stories were most popular with the audience. Students use this information to make a plan for the following month. Both websites are public forums, including letters to the editor, polls, photo galleries and social media interaction. A publicity team manages social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Snapchat.

All five publications pool resources for advertising. The publications are completely independent financially and all staff members are expected to participate; advertising is tied to their grade. Students participate in a three-day camp over the summer to prepare for the next school year. On the last day of camp, students sell ads in teams for the whole day after receiving instruction in sales pitch methods. Advertising is sold based on size and frequency. Chiarelli reports that the publications have never been in the red.

***Interview***

*Question: When and why did you start to offer online advertising?*

Answer (Jake Chiarelli): “Initially, we started about five years ago. We decided to offer it as a promotion for print ads, not Web ads by themselves for any set price. If you spent $200 or more for ads in the paper or yearbook, you got free Web advertising for the year. Typically, we also offered a free yearbook for that same deal. Online advertising has grown in the last three years. We started offering year-round Web ads independently for $50. This semester, I came up with a plan for next year that assigns different options for size and frequency, like we do for the news magazine. Right now, we have three or four different options for ad spaces online, so we’re making a model for that.”

*Question: What resources did you use to help you make that plan?*

Answer: “It’s been looking at other schools’ sites. We also looked at Google Ad Search, but I don’t want to be dependent upon something we can’t do ourselves. We want to make sure that we know how to do everything we do and make sure it’s the best we can make it. We don’t model ourselves after anything except maybe other staffs.”

*Question: What have been some of the pros and cons of this advertising model?*

Answer: “We have a budget to sustain ourselves, and this offers a whole new option for funding our staff. This is completely separate from print, and so we can offer this in other ways. With print, we have to know by that first month what ads are going in, which is more limiting. This is a way that we can extend sales throughout the year. For cons, we haven’t pushed out Web ads as we should in the past, so we lost out on an opportunity there. For social media, we don’t want to populate those accounts with ads. Our audience wouldn’t appreciate that.”

*Question: How do you pitch online advertising to businesses?*

Answer: “With the newspaper or yearbook, you’re getting a set number of times the ad will be printed. The lifetime of that ad is how long a person reads the paper, and then it won’t be seen again. With the site, it is always rotating through that front page. It is a much more frequently-updated thing. There are students and staff at the school that see that page every day. Really, it’s just more frequency and exposure to those ads.”

*Question: What kind of difference does this model make for your publications and/or for the businesses?*

Answer: “Actually, we discovered recently that a small popcorn shop and a doughnut shop became more popular after we did a story about them and they advertised with us. They said there were more and more students coming in after. This exposes businesses in our community to our students and staff, so it’s a positive thing for them to get that exposure.”

*Question: Do you often write stories about the businesses that advertise with you?*

Answer: “No, only if the staff agrees that it would be a good story independent of the advertising. In this case, it was.”

*Question: What recommendations would you make to a school that wanted to do this?*

Answer: “The first thing is to get everyone on staff to buy in to advertising, whether that is a grade or making selling ads a requirement to be on staff. Everyone should participate. The only way we can do what we do is if everyone pitches in. Also, offer lots of options to advertisers: sizes, prices, variations in frequency. Customers are less likely to advertise without options.”

***Evaluation***

2. Based on what you read, list three (3) considerations that a publication should take into account when developing an online advertising strategy. Then, explain why each consideration is important.

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| **Consideration** | **Why is this important?** |
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