

RECRUITING THROUGH IDENTIFICATION: IDENTIFICATION STRATEGIES AND
TACTICS USED IN EXTERNAL HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

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This exploratory study examines higher education strategic communication for identification inducement strategies and tactics using Cheney's (1983) typology as a guiding framework. The study also explores the differences in identification inducement strategies and tactics used between traditional public universities and for-profit online educators. The results of a deductive textual analysis indicate that identification inducement strategies are used in higher education strategic communication designed to recruit students, an external audience with a reverse paid relationship with the organization. A new strategy and two tactics are added to Cheney's typology to fully account for the identification appeals identified.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a big business built around student recruitment and retention. In today's higher education marketplace, colleges and universities face increasing competition from for-profit educators and changing student demographics. From 1998 to 2008, the number of for-profit education institutions jumped 55 percent from 672 to 1,043 (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Colleges and universities in the Midwest face another challenge – a shrinking pool of potential high school graduates. According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, more than half of the states in the Midwest are projected to experience population declines over the next ten years (Schmidt, 2008). With more than 4,300 higher education institutions determined to fill classes to capacity, competition for students has become fierce (The Nations Institutions, 2009).

In addition to the competitive marketplace, the current economic crisis poses a new set of challenges. In a 2009 report by Longmire and Company, "Impact of the Economy on College Enrollments," 46 percent of households surveyed reported that their plans for college have changed because of the current economic downturn (Longmire and Company, Inc., 2009). In a 2009 National Association for College Admission Counseling survey, 45 percent of colleges reported a decrease in the number of students accepting admission offers (NACAC, 2009). As prospective and current students re-evaluate education options, colleges and universities are changing the way they do business in hopes to "do what they can to maintain operations and survive" (Dessoff, 2009, p. 33). For some institutions, this means cutting costs or raising tuition. For others, it means building or sustaining enrollment to secure student-generated dollars. The future of higher education, "an immovable part of the American economy" (Scruton, 2006, p. 48), has become a pertinent topic of discussion

across the country from legislative debate over funding to kitchen table discussions about careers, financial stability, and dreams.

With increasing competition, already dwindling government funding in jeopardy, and student concern about the affordability of higher education, the multi-billion dollar higher education sector faces uncertain times. In response to these challenges, colleges and universities are investing millions of dollars in strategic communication to reach and persuade target audiences to support their institution. Students, the lifeblood of all higher education institutions, are often the primary audience of this strategic communication as colleges and universities attempt to persuade students to attend their institution.

Botan (1997) defines strategic communication as “planned, research-based persuasive and informational campaigns” with the purpose of “influencing individuals, groups, organizations, even whole societies” (p. 189). Higher education institutions use strategic communication to build relationships, establish legitimacy, and persuade multiple audiences such as potential students, current students, parents, alumni, donors and supporters, industry partners, research and development companies, and government agencies to support the institution in some capacity. Strategic communication efforts can be labeled as advertising campaigns, public relations, recruitment campaigns, community relations, image campaigns, marketing, capital campaigns, and alumni relations. For the purposes of this study, however, strategic communication refers to higher education student recruitment and image campaigns with the objective of recruiting and retaining students.

Often, the goal of strategic communication is to create supportive attitudes toward the organization, which in turn can lead to supportive behavior (Sung & Yang, 2008). Strategic communication can have powerful effects if it can foster supportive attitudes

toward the organization by inducing identification. Organizational identification can be described as an individual's sense of belonging, loyalty, or commitment to an organization (Cheney, 1983b). These supportive attitudes lead to actions that an individual sees as best fitting the mission of the organization (Cheney). While identification happens on the individual level, organizations often use strategic communication to invite or open the door for identification. In this process, the organization induces identification through persuasive communication and the individual completes the process by acting or making decisions based on the organization's best interest (Cheney, 1983).

This exploratory study examines higher education strategic communication as a form of identification. Recent research shows that organizational identification in higher education affects students' decision to attend, commitment, and support beyond graduation (Sung & Yang, 2008; Ivy, 2001; Kazoleas, Yungwook, & Moffitt, 2001). With research demonstrating the role of identification in the decision making process, exploring whether or not colleges and universities use strategic communication to initiate the identification process may provide useful insight to the student recruitment and retention processes. As higher education continues to be a globally discussed topic, it is important to understand the role strategic communication plays in keeping the university a viable institution. The remainder of this chapter will introduce the main concepts of this study. First, the chapter will review the role of strategic communication in higher education. Second, the chapter will lay the theoretical foundation by introducing organizational identification and identification inducement strategy.

The State of Higher Education

Higher education in the United States boomed after World War II as hundreds of new universities and two-year colleges sprung up across the country to meet the growing demand for education from baby boomers (Kotler & Fox, 1995). During this period government funding increased and new financial aid options became available, making college education accessible and affordable. By the 1980s and 1990s, competition for students among colleges and universities began to intensify as both the high school student population and government funding dramatically declined (Anctil, 2008; Parameswaran & Glowacka, 1995). During this time, there was an influx of for-profit educators including online-based organizations (e.g., University of Phoenix, DeVry University, and Walden University) entering the higher education market (Strout, 2006). From 1997 to 2007, enrollment at four-year for-profit institutions increased 285 percent (The Nations Students, 2009). For example, the University of Phoenix, founded in 1976 as a for-profit alternative educator, reported 420,700 enrolled students during the quarter ending May 2009, making it the nation's largest private educator (University of Phoenix, 2009b). With evening and weekend classes, online courses offering, and flexible delivery options, the University of Phoenix has become a major competitor to traditional (not-for-profit, state, and private) colleges and universities.

Today there are more than 4,300 colleges and universities, including four-year, two-year, public, private, for-profit, and nonprofit institutions, vying for a declining population of high school graduates (The Nations Institutions, 2009; Strout, 2006). While colleges and universities rely on multiple sources of revenue (e.g., appropriations, research, licensing inventions, gifts, and grants), student-generated dollars comprise a significant share of

annual revenues. During the 2007 fiscal year, student tuition and fees accounted for an average of 17 percent of annual revenues at public four-year universities, and as much as 51 percent at private nonprofit two-year colleges (The Nation Resources, 2009). Sales of dining and housing auxiliary services account for another four to eight percent of annual revenues (The Nation Resources). With a sizeable percent of annual revenues based on student head count, colleges and universities must maintain target enrollments to remain fiscally sound. Public institutions have additional pressures of maintaining target enrollments as much of state funding is based upon enrollment.

In response to the changing landscape of higher education, colleges and universities, much like business and industry, have embraced strategic communication to differentiate themselves in a competitive marketplace (Sung & Yang, 2008; Anctil, 2008; Parameswari, & Glowacka, 1995). For example, in 1996 Bryant University, a private university in Rhode Island, embarked on an ongoing strategic communication campaign that has defined the school's mission, communicated the organization's brand to key audiences, managed media relations, developed a strategic recruitment advertising and promotional materials program, and managed online recruitment tools (Sevier & Sickler, 2009). The campaign continues today with expanded online and social media communication strategies. The college's longstanding commitment to and investment in strategic communication efforts is representative of the shift in communication models in modern higher education institutions.

Today, with general acceptance and understanding of the importance of communication, colleges and universities invest millions of dollars annually in strategic campaigns. It is estimated that public colleges and universities spend up to five percent of

their annual budgets on marketing and strategic communication, while private for-profit institutions spend around 20 percent (Strout, 2006). Little research, however, explores the strategies and tactics used in higher education strategic communication campaigns. In today's competitive marketplace with tightening budgets and increasing scrutiny on spending, it is increasingly important for colleges and universities to understand potential strategies and tactics that could increase the success of their strategic communication campaigns.

Organizational Identification

Communication, identification, and persuasion in organizations are inextricably linked (Boyd, 2004). Using strategic communication, organizations attempt to persuade key audiences to make decisions that best fit the organization's goals. Communicating messages is only part of successful strategic communication. Something must occur to make key stakeholders act. Identification is one way to induce the desired action. According to Cheney (1983), an individual who is inclined to identify with the organization will be open to persuasive communication and might be responsive to the inducements initiated by the organization. An individual who is "inclined to identify" may have similar values, goals, and interests as the organization. The planning and research element of strategic communication narrows the focus of organizational rhetoric to target these individuals who are inclined to identify with the organization and most likely to be open to identification inducements.

Identification is an ongoing process involving the individual and communication from the organization. Tompkins and Cheney (1985) argue that identification is central to organizing as it is directly linked to decision making. When an individual identifies with an

organization, a connection or relationship is formed that has a powerful effect on that individual's decision-making process. According to Cheney (1983b), organizational identifications "aid us in making sense of our experience, in organizing our thoughts, in achieving decisions, and in anchoring the self" (p. 342).

With more than 4,300 colleges and universities across the country sending out strategic communication messages, organizational identification helps an individual make sense of the myriad of messages. In a way, it narrows the focus of the individual, allowing them to "see that which he or she identifies" (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985). Once identification is induced, the myriad of messages goes away. For example, the *Journal of College Admissions* reports that high school juniors become the prime targets for communication from college admissions offices (Chimes & Gordon, 2008). In an interview with a student fitting that profile, Chimes and Gordon learn that endless packets of recruitment materials become overwhelming to the student. Sean, the student, stated, "There is simply too much literature to consume. The truth is, I grow bored and lose interest pretty quickly. Where is the relation or connection?" (Chimes & Gordon, p. 27). It is not until Sean begins to identify with an institution, that the messages begin to resonate and he recognizes himself as "a new member of the Class of 2012" at the University of Michigan (Chimes & Gordon, p. 30). The identification process began with Sean when the University of Michigan's communication pieces expressed values that aligned with Sean's view of higher education. This example demonstrates the powerful role identification has on the enrollment process.

Organizations rely on communication to induce identification, which, ideally, leads to persuasion and action consistent with the organization's objectives. In a study of

employee newsletters, Cheney (1983) found that organizations induce identification through communication using association and dissociation strategies. Association strategies attempt to induce identification by establishing connections between the organization and the audience, while dissociation strategies attempt to identify common threats thus unifying the organization and the audience. Building off Burke's (1969) identification strategies, Cheney posited the following four types of identification inducement strategies in organizational communication: common ground technique, identification through antithesis, assumed "we", and unifying symbols. Communication using the common ground technique is an association strategy that openly ties the organization with its audience often through discussing shared values and goals. Identification through antithesis is a disassociation strategy in which the audience unites with the organization and disassociates with a common "enemy." The assumed "we" strategy uses both association and disassociation techniques, and is often subtle and unintentional. Organizations imply a unified "we," bringing together two groups that may seem to have little in common. Often a "they" is also implied to further unite the organization and the audience. Cheney's final strategy is unifying symbols. This strategy incorporates the portrayal of a strong symbol as a means of identification. Company names, logos, trademarks, and branding also act as unifying symbols.

In addition to the four inducement strategies, Cheney (1983) identified six tactics found within the common ground technique; Cheney defines tactics as "specific forms of appeals" categorized within a general strategy (p. 150). The identified tactics include: expression of concern for the individual, recognition of individual contributions, espousal of shared values, advocacy of benefits and activities, praise by outsiders, and testimonials

by employees. These tactics emerged as dominant themes in examples of identification found within the common ground technique.

Conclusion

This chapter introduces the relationship between higher education strategic communication and organizational identification inducement. With higher education facing significant challenges including the current economic downturn, increased competition from for-profit educators, and a decreasing number of high school graduates, strategic communication is increasingly relied upon to recruit and retain students. Messages that induce organizational identification can be a powerful factor in the individual's decision-making process. Organizational identification in the higher education institution context may increase student recruitment, retention, and support beyond graduation. As universities and colleges across the country invest millions of dollars in strategic communication campaigns, it is important to understand if colleges and universities use strategic communication to initiate the identification process, and if so, which inducement strategies and tactics are used. A better understanding of how university strategic communication induces student identification will provide higher education institutions insight to more effective communication.

This exploratory study will analyze strategic communication from six universities for identification inducement strategies and tactics. To accomplish this goal, this thesis will first provide a literature review of organization identification, Cheney's (1983) organizational identification inducement strategies, and external organizational communication. Second, this thesis will examine strategic communication campaigns of six universities: North Dakota State University, University of Minnesota, Western Michigan

University, University of Phoenix, Kaplan University, and Walden University. These campaigns serve as exemplars and provide text and symbols for analysis. Third, the text and symbols from the six campaigns will be analyzed. Finally, the thesis will discuss the types of identification inducement strategies and tactics used in higher education strategic communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic communication in higher education has become an important tool to recruit and retain students. Using strategic communication, colleges and universities attempt to persuade potential and targeted students to attend their institution. Inducing organizational identification may be a powerful way for colleges and universities to accomplish this goal as research suggests that identification has a powerful effect on the decision-making process (Tompkins & Cheney, 1985; Simon, 1979; Burke, 1969). According to Cheney (1983b) individuals who are likely to identify with an organization are more open to persuasive communication from that organization. Based upon this premise, organizations identify target audiences and use strategic communication as a means to induce identification. If successful, the target begins the identification process and makes decisions congruent with perceived best interests of the organizations.

This study explores the ways identification inducement strategies are used in higher education strategic communication. To accomplish this, six university campaigns used to recruit students are analyzed for Cheney's (1983) identification inducement strategies and tactics. This chapter provides a review of relevant literature on organizational identification and inducement strategies. First, literature on organizational identification will be reviewed to situate this study within research on the rhetoric of organizational identification. Second, Cheney's identification inducement strategies and tactics will be presented. Third, literature on organizational identification and external communication will be reviewed to position this study within an emerging area of organizational communication research. Finally, the chapter will present the research questions.

Organizational Identification

The concept of identification can be traced back to Aristotle's perspective on rhetoric and persuasion. Simply put, identification with a rhetor or piece of rhetoric opens the door to persuasion. In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke (1969) recognizes identification as a vital element of rhetoric and introduces a contemporary perspective on the phenomenon. In his perspective, Burke expands the definition of identification to an organizational context by arguing that identification is central to organizing as it aids the individual in coping with the "mystery" or division of society. According to Burke, the individual acts to "identify" with social groups of people [the organization] with similar goals and values, which have been communicated through "administrative rhetoric." This identification builds a sense of belonging with the organization and what Burke terms as "corporate identity." Burke's concept of identification focuses on the individual and the process of self-inducement while introducing its central role in organizing.

Following Burke, Simon (1976) explored the link between identification and decision making. Simon positioned identification as central to understanding the decision-making process in an organization. He rationalized that identification with an organization leads an individual to choose certain alternatives. He stated: "A person identifies with a group when, in making a decision, he evaluates the several alternatives of choice in terms of the consequences for the specified group" (p. 205). According to Simon's perspective on identification, the decision maker's pool of alternatives is self-edited to fit his or her targets of identification. Thus, identification enables organizations to confidently communicate decisional premises to members who seek to identify with the organization. Simon explains organizational identification from organizational administrative perspective.

Building upon the theoretical framework of Burke (1969) and Simon (1976), Cheney (1983b) further examined identification in the contemporary corporate organizational setting. Cheney, in Burkean tradition, argued that organizational identification is rooted in rhetoric by noting: “identifying allows people to persuade and be persuaded” (p. 342). He also agreed with Burke’s notion of identification as a response to the division of society. Because of the desire to belong, an individual will be open to persuasive communication from the organization they seek to belong to (Cheney, 1983b). Cheney was also influenced by Simon’s work noting the organization’s influence on identification and the individual’s subsequent decision-making process.

Cheney (1983b) sought to explore how the process of identification influences decision making from an organizational communication perspective. He explored identification among employees of an industrial high-tech company as both a process and a product (eg. attitudes, behaviors, and intentions). Specifically, he examined how the *process* of identification with a corporate organization explains the process of an individual’s on-the-job decision making (Cheney). Prior to this work, Cheney cited Kaufman’s (1960) U.S. Forest Service employee study as one of the only pieces of organizational communication research that focused on the process of identification. Like Kaufman, Cheney sought to gain insight on ongoing dynamics of the individual-organizational relationship.

Cheney (1983b) used two methodologies to collect data on organizational identification as both a process and a product. He conducted interviews to gather individual accounts to explain the process of identification as it relates to job-related decisions. Participants were asked questions about the employee’s role in the organizations, specific

decisions, decision-making practices, employee's identifications, and the organization's actions to foster identification. The second method Cheney used to gather data was his Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ). This 25-item questionnaire focused on collecting quantifiable data on the product or outcome of organizational identification. The OIQ measured employee's level of organizational identification across three dimensions: membership, loyalty, and similarity.

Cheney (1983b) found that employees were generally open to and receptive of communication from the organization that shared its values and goals. The research suggested that the majority of employees consider these values and goals when evaluating on-the-job alternatives. In fact, one-third of the employees reported that their decision-making actually helped the organization achieve these values and goals. In regard to the sources of decisional premises, the employees reported that communication was derived from both inside and outside the organization. The research suggested that employees who indicated the decisional premise came from organizational sources strongly identified with the organization, demonstrating that individuals who are likely to identify are open to premises communicated by the organization. The results also indicated that the level of identification varied across organizational roles, department membership, and employment tenure. Finally, the research showed that the organization's communication of policies influenced identification. Open communication of the policies helped foster organizational identification among the majority of employees.

The results Cheney's (1983b) study advanced the theory of organizational identification from an organizational communication perspective. Cheney acknowledged the need for further organizational identification research on the individual-organization

relationship. He suggested that his study was “a glimpse of the workings of identification as a process which engages and even inspires the individual decision maker in an organization” (Cheney, 1983b, p. 361).

An emerging area of organizational communication scholarship on identification is concerned with how an organization’s constructed external image affects identification (Riketta, 2006; Wan-Huggins, Riordan, & Griffeth, 1998; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Dutton et al. argued that perceived external image among organizational members greatly affects identification. They define perceived external image as how individuals believe outsiders view the organization. Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail’s research suggested that individuals are more likely to identify with organizations when the external image is perceived to be positive. This research informs organizational leadership how communication plays a significant role in constructing and controlling external image, which ultimately effects organizational identification.

Mael and Ashforth (1992) examined identification and college alumni in what they considered “a fairly unique institutional setting: that of the college” (p. 119). In this study, Mael and Ashforth developed a scale to measure organizational identification among college alumni. Results of the study indicated that organizational identification and loyalty can be controlled through various means including managing salient symbols (e.g., traditions, rituals, and sagas) that construct the organization’s external image. The authors suggested further identification research in varying organizational contexts, including higher education. For university officials, Mael and Ashforth’s research suggests that strategic communication should be developed with the purpose of inducing identification among potential students by constructing a positive external image of the organization.

Identification Inducement Strategies and Tactics

Within organizational identification theory, Cheney (1983) offered a typology of identification inducement strategies. Cheney broadened Burke's concepts of identification and consubstantiality from the perspective of the individual to that of an organization. While Burke's notions of identification focused on the individual act of identifying or self-inducement, Cheney expanded identification to organizational rhetoric where the "move" is initiated by the organization. Cheney posited that the organization initiates the inducement process through communication of its values and goals, and redefined the concept of consubstantiality as "a product or state of identification that leads an individual to see things from the 'perspective' of a target" (Cheney, 1983, p. 146).

In a study of employee newsletters, Cheney (1983) "operationalized" Burkean identification into strategies and tactics use in organizational rhetoric to induce identification. In his identification inducement theory, the organization, acting as the rhetor, initiates the identification process through associational and dissociational communication strategies and tactics that induce identification. Cheney identified the following strategies: common ground technique, identification through antithesis, assumed "we", and unifying symbols; and the following tactics within the common ground technique: expression of concern for the individual, recognition of individual contributions, espousal of shared values, advocacy of benefits and activities, praise by outsiders, and testimonials by employees. Organizations use these strategies and tactics to "tap into the identification process, thereby catalyzing the persuasion of individual members" (Cheney, 1983, p. 150).

Organizational communication research using Cheney's (1983) identification inducement typology has been limited. Included in this body of research is Adler's (1995)

study of Lutheran Church newsletters, DiSanza and Bullis (1999) examination of U.S. Forest Service employee newsletters, and Boyd's (2004) study of R.J. Reynolds' advertising campaign. These studies will be discussed in detail following definitions of each of the strategies and tactics outlined in Cheney's typology.

Strategies

Cheney's (1983) identification inducement scheme included four strategies: common ground technique, identification through antithesis, assumed "we", and unifying symbols. These strategies are explained as "intentional and unintentional attempts by the organization to convince employees to accept the organization's interests and values as his or her own to reinforce existing identifications" (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999, p. 355). According to Cheney, the strategies ranged from associational to dissociational on a varying continuum. He argued that association and dissociation often mirrored each other within the strategies. For example, Macintosh and Microsoft Windows television advertising campaigns are examples of both association and dissociation strategies at work. Consumers are pit against each other by declaring, "I'm a Mac" or "I'm a PC." This is dissociational identification. At the same time, consumers who use the same computer brand band together by declaring their allegiance. This is identification through association. Both strategies are in play in one advertisement. The following explains Cheney's four strategies in more detail.

Common ground technique. Cheney's (1983) common ground technique strategy is where the organization [rhetor] makes a direct link between the individual and the organization. Often, the organization presents its values and goals in a way that aligns with the individual's values and goals. This predominantly association strategy relies upon the

premise of the organization implying “‘I am like you’ or ‘I have the same interests as you’” (Cheney, 1983, p. 148). This strategy may also work by offering the individual identity through honors, rewards, and recognition programs, as well as company-sponsored clubs. Cheney found the common ground technique in six of the ten analyzed employee newsletters, making it the most used strategy.

In a study of rhetorical identification strategies used in Lutheran Church newsletters, Alder (1995) also found the common ground strategy predominately used. Alder cites the following passage as an example of this strategy used in her sample, “We Missourians tend to be cautious and careful, weighing and examining every option before acting, and then choosing safe and traditional ways. We are concerned that change may jeopardize the very faith that we hold so dear” (p. 34). The church uses this passage to express shared values and beliefs of the conservative readers in hopes to induce identification.

Identification through antithesis. Cheney’s (1983) identification through antithesis strategy initiates inducement by “the act of uniting against a common ‘enemy’” (p. 148). The organization attempts to unite with the individual by positioning both against a common enemy or threat. Organizational rhetoric often implies the existence of outsiders who threaten the values, goals, and prosperity of the organization. This strategy is often seen in political and social movement rhetoric. Stand Up, a non-profit organization founded to achieve the Millennium Development Goals to end poverty, uses this strategy in its communication. The slogan “Stand Up Against Poverty” is used to unite individuals to fight against a common threat – poverty. In addition to poverty, the campaign positions world leaders as a common enemy. The organization makes the following statement on its

web site: “‘Stand Up, Take Action’ is a vital opportunity to send a clear message to world leaders to deliver on the promise we made to the world’s people to end poverty and usher a new era of equality, health, and prosperity” (Stand Against Poverty, 2009).

Assumed “we”. Cheney (1983) labels the assumed “we” strategy as the most subtle strategy in his scheme. In this strategy, an assumed or transcendent “we” and corresponding “they” is implied in relationships that are often taken for granted, not well defined, or have little or no apparent connections. Pronouns “we” and “they” may actually be present in the discourse, but is often absent, thus being assumed. Cheney argues that an assumed or transcendent “we” can be a very powerful identification inducement because it often goes unnoticed. By going unnoticed, individuals often “accept this assumption and its corollaries unquestioningly” (Cheney, 1983, p. 154).

Examples of overt assumed “we” are often found in messages from organizational leadership. Cheney (1983) cited this strategy in a column from the chairman of Arthur Andersen and Co. addressing employees. The chairman used the assumed “we” 34 times in a relatively short statement. For example, he states “We all recognize the importance of timely and informative communications and we hope that no matter what our size, we will be able to retain togetherness so that we can obtain our combined objectives” (Cheney, 1983, p. 154). More subtle, unnoticed use of the assumed “we” strategy are also used.

Unifying symbols. After examining employee newsletters, Cheney (1983) introduced a fourth identification inducement strategy - unifying symbols. Organizations use names, logos, trademarks, imagery, and branding as an identification strategy. This strategy was not suggested in Burke’s scheme on identification inducement, but was inherent in Cheney’s newsletter study. Guided by Burke’s (1969) concept of “form” and “content,”

Cheney examines form, positing “an individual may come to accept the identifications that are shaped and suggested by appealing forms such as well-crafted statements of corporate ‘identity’ and their referents (logos, trademarks, etc.)—in whose development corporations make serious investments” (p. 155).

Examples of the use of the unified symbols strategy can easily be seen in today’s highly commercialized and visual marketplace. Logos and corporate branding have made corporations household names, recognized across the globe. Nike with its swoosh, Macintosh with its apple, and McDonalds with its golden arches are examples of organizations successfully employing Cheney’s (1983) unifying symbols strategy as millions of individuals identify with the organization and select their products. Employees wear apparel emblazoned with these logos, proudly implying “I am Apple Computers” or “I work at Nike.” Unified symbols help give employees corporate identity easily recognized by outside audiences.

Tactics

In addition to inducement strategies, Cheney (1983) identified specific tactical categories used in organizational rhetoric used to initiate identification. Differentiating these from the four strategies, Cheney defines tactics as “specific forms of appeals” categorized within a general strategy. (p. 150). Cheney identified six tactics within the common ground technique including: expression of concern for the individual; recognition of individual contributions; espousal of shared values; advocacy of benefits and activities; praise by outsiders; and testimonials by employees. Though distinct, the tactics can also overlap.

Expression of concern for the individual. Organizations use the expression of concern for the individual tactic to demonstrate compassion and caring for organizational members on the individual level. In this tactic, messages are crafted to highlight the role of individual members rather than organization the individuals belong to. Cheney (1983) call this the “people factor.” 3M Corporation uses this tactic on the company’s web site in a section titled “Investing in People” (3M, 2009). Information on the company’s Human Resources Principles is prefaced with: “The success of 3M over the years has been due, in large part, to the dedication, skill and effort of our employees...and we will continue to place importance on helping employees develop their diverse talents to create the company’s success” (3M). In this passage, 3M clearly communicates its reliance upon employees as individuals to maintain the company’s culture of innovation and excellence.

Recognition of individual contributions. The second tactic, recognition of individual contributions, is much like expression of concern for the individual. This tactic also focuses on the “people factor,” but specifically recognizes people for exemplary service, work, accomplishments, etc. By employing this tactic, organizations suggest that the contribution of members as an individual builds and sustains organizational values. According to Cheney (1983), organizations often create clubs such as the “President’s Club” or special awards such as “Employee of the Month” to recognize individual contributions. Membership in these clubs and receipt of these awards help foster dedication and loyalty to the organization among employees.

Espousal of shared values. Cheney (1983) describes the espousal of shared values tactic as the organization’s appeal to employees based upon presumed shared values. Organizations attempt to convey the message that “‘we’ have the same interests as ‘you,’

the employee” (Cheney, 1983, p. 151). Ford Motor Company overtly uses this tactic on its website to identify with both employees and customers. In a section on the company’s website titled “Our Values,” Ford expresses the organization’s commitment to community services, volunteerism, education, safety, diversity, environmental issues, and American Heritage (Ford Motor Company, 2009). The company expresses its dedication to American cultural institutions through funding opportunities and with its slogan “Ford Made in America” (Ford Motor Company). These values are thought to appeal to both employees and customers, making Ford a great place to work and a great organization to support.

Advocacy of benefits and activities. Organizations utilize the advocacy of benefits and activities tactic to highlight company-offered employee perks. Individuals become attached or attracted to the organization because of the additional benefits employees receive, often not found at similar or competing organizations. General Mills uses this tactic to demonstrate how the organization values the wellbeing and professional growth of its employees: “Employees who lead healthy, fulfilling lives are more likely to make a strong contribution in the workplace” (General Mills, 2009). The company positions some of its employee benefits as “lifestyle” benefits that aid in balancing work demands and employee home life (General Mills). In addition to what the company considers basic benefits (eg. insurance, annual and sick leave, and retirement plans), General Mills offers lifestyle benefits such as summer hours, flexible work schedules, parenting benefits, and education leaves.

Praise by outsiders. The praise by outsiders tactic can be seen as an external perspective that gives the organization legitimacy. Magazine articles, newspaper stories, industry awards, support of organizations from influential individuals are often showcased

in organization communication to serve this purpose. In DiSanza and Bullis's (1999) study of U.S. Forest Service newsletters, the authors found this tactic used twenty times.

Examples of this tactic found within DiSanza and Bullis's sample stated: "Newspapers and television coverage of the campout reported that the outing should bring better campground compliances with the Americans With Disabilities Act" (p. 363) and "I would like to bring your attention to the commendable efforts and personal and professional service provided by Mr. Dave Kern" (p. 365).

Testimonials by employees. Companies use testimonials of employees to offer perspectives on the organization from sources other than management. These testimonials often express employee commitment, dedication, and affection toward the organization (Cheney, 1983). American Honda Motor Company uses this tactic on its website, showcasing testimonials to highlight perspectives from employees with job descriptions ranging from research to marketing to manufacturing. One employee testimonial focuses on the creative freedom Honda offers its engineering employees: "As a Honda associate, I am constantly challenged to come up with new and challenging ways to do things and solve problems. I feel if I can dream it and justify it, I can do it. It's the power of dreams put into action – literally – and it's extremely empowering" (Honda, 2009). Employers use testimonials such as this to garner employee moral and support from within the organization. It is easy for employees to support their employer if they hear words of praise about the organization from their co-worker or close acquaintance.

Cheney's (1983) identification inducement typology provides a framework to analyze persuasive organizational communication. He notes that the overarching strategies and focused tactics work in harmony to create "especially potent statements about the

relationship of the individual to the organization” (Cheney, 1983, p. 156). Whether intentional or unintentional, Cheney argues that organizations use these strategies to induce identification among employees.

Identification Inducement Research

Following Cheney’s (1983) development of identification inducement strategies, a small number of researchers have used the typology to dissect organization communication. Adler (1995) explored inducement strategies in newsletters from two Lutheran Churches. She analyzed 24 newsletters of the Evangelical Lutheran Church’s *The Lutheran* and 24 issues of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod’s *The Lutheran Witness* using Cheney’s typology. Adler found that although similar in culture, the two Lutheran denominations utilized different identification inducement strategies in letters from church leaders. This research was aimed to build scholarship on rhetorical identification used by churches to sustain membership and build loyalty.

DiSanza and Bullis (1999) used a multi-methodological approach of text analysis, interviews, and measurement of organizational commitment to explore identification strategies used in U.S. Forest Service employee newsletters. The researchers used Cheney’s (1983) identification inducement typology as a framework to examine the textual content of the newsletters. The results verified Cheney’s typology, finding examples of all four inducement strategies within the text. The 1999 study, however, showed a dramatic reduction in the use of the identification through antithesis strategy citing only one example in 24 articles. Also, DiSanza and Bullis identified additional tactics under the common ground technique. Added to Cheney’s scheme were: global recognition of individuals; recognition of individuals contributions outside the organization; invitation; and bragging.

In addition to textual analysis of newsletters, DiSanza and Bullis conducted interviews with U.S. Forest Service employees to collect reader responses to the newsletters. The researchers used the data gathered in the interviews to explore the “micromoments through which the [identification] process occurs” (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999, p. 350). The results suggested that personal experiences play a significant role in responses to the identification inducements in the newsletters. The final method used to gather data in this study was Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian’s (1974) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). This measure was taken to explore the relationship between reader responses to the newsletter and current measures of organizational identification.

DiSanza and Bullis’ (1999) study is important organizational identification rhetoric research because it validated Cheney’s (1983) original identification inducement typology and introduced four new common ground tactics. Unlike Cheney’s study, this study used a multi-methodological approach, allowing data to be systematically collected and triangulated. This study validates the need for additional scholarly research on identification inducement strategies in the organizational setting because it verifies that organizations continue to use inducement strategies in internal corporate communication. The study also introduces a new methodological approach to collecting and analyzing inducement strategies allowing the data to be quantifiable and the study to be replicable.

In a study of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company’s 1995 advertising campaign, Boyd (2004) used traditional Burkean identification appeals and portions of Cheney’s (1983) identification typology to analyze the campaign’s persuasive messages. Within the text, he identified sophisticated uses of Cheney’s assumed “we” and identification through antithesis strategies. Boyd argued that the R. J. Reynold’s campaign invites identification

through Burke's (1969) principle of the oxymoron but is fatally flawed because the invitation does not lead individuals to advance status. Boyd's study is an interesting departure from previous organizational identification research as it delves into publication relations and advertising. The research initiates intriguing conversations on ethics, strategy, and research of external communication and organizational identification.

Communication with External Audiences

The majority of work on organization identification has been inter-organizational. However, some work has embraced organization identification as a way to communicate with external stakeholders as well as organizational members. Cheney (1992) sets the stage for this stream of work as he reflects on the changing role of the corporate rhetor. He acknowledges that corporate communications now encompasses issues management, identity management, internal communication, public relations, advertising, corporate advocacy, and other related activities (Cheney). Cheney and Christensen (2001) take this position further arguing that because the traditional lines between internal communication, public relations, and issues management have blurred, and even begun to merge, internal and external audiences are now being communicated to in similar fashion. They argue that identification is a common binding factor in internal and external communication stating that strong organization identification can "raise employee motivation while inspiring confidence among an organization's external target group" (Cheney & Christensen, 2001, p. 246).

Despite the acknowledged shifts in corporate rhetoric, the majority of organization communication research remains focused on internal communication and its effect on

employees. Cheney (1992) argues that because of the pervasive nature of corporate public rhetoric, scholars need to further examine external corporate communication:

The corporate message, the corporate rhetor, and the corporate audience shape much of our communicative world. Therefore, to comprehend corporate or organizational rhetoric we must engage social structure and process writ large...Public relations, along with the related activities of corporate advocacy, issue management, and identity management, provides an important and expanding arena for investigation and understanding of corporate or organizational rhetoric (p. 179).

Based on this perspective, an emerging body of work has begun to explore external organizational communication. One study in particular, Vaughn's (1997) rhetorical-organizational study, is of interest to this thesis. In this study, Vaughn examines communication used to recruit employees in high-technology industries for values-based identification strategies. His data analysis focuses on employee handbooks, recruitment pamphlets, training manuals, print advertisements, annual reports, and newsletters from eight technology companies. He considered the recruitment pamphlets and print advertisements external communication, while the other data sources served both external and internal communication purposes. Vaughn found that all the high-technology companies induce identification through communication of organizational values of innovation, quality, equality, individualism, and teamwork. He argues that these organizations use Cheney's (1983) common ground strategy to "create, nurture, and maintain organizational identification through the espousal of shared values" (Vaughn, 1997, p. 133). From a public relations/external communication perspective, Vaughn argues

that effective use of values-based identification strategies can help companies recruit and retain individuals likely to maintain high job satisfaction and loyalty to the organization. This study offers interesting insight on how organizations can use identification strategies in external communication to recruit potential employees.

Conclusion

During the past three decades, there has been extensive scholarly research on organizational identification, and the topic continues to be heavily studied as the organization remains entrenched in our society. However, much of organizational identification research has focused on internal employee corporate discourse and the product of identification represented through a form of attachment such as commitment and loyalty. Little research has explored the process of how identification is formed. There appears to be even less research that examines the identification inducement process in organizational communication to external audiences, with little or no research examining communication to external audiences in a reverse paid relationship with the organization. In a reverse paid relationship with an organization, the individual pays the organization (e.g. a student paying a university, a club member paying membership dues). This relationship is opposite of the employer/employee relationship that dominates the organizational communication research and literature.

This study adds to our understanding of organizational identification by exploring the ways identification inducement strategies are used in higher education strategic communication used to recruit students, an external audience with a reverse paid relationship with the organization. Specifically, this study examines strategic communication campaigns of three public universities: North Dakota State University,

University of Minnesota, Western Michigan University; and three online universities: University of Phoenix, Walden University, and Kaplan University. This research also seeks to explore differences, if any, between public four-year residential universities and for-profit online educators. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What, if any, identification inducement strategies and tactics are present in each of the six higher education campaigns?

RQ 1a: What is the frequency of these strategies and tactics.

RQ 2: What, if any, differences are present in identification inducement strategies and tactics used between traditional public universities and for-profit online educators?

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine strategic communication in higher education for identification inducement strategies and tactics using Cheney's (1983) typology as a method of analysis. Specifically, this study examines student recruitment campaigns of three public universities: North Dakota State University, University of Minnesota, and Western Michigan University; and three online universities: University of Phoenix, Walden University, and Kaplan University. This study uses deductive thematic textual analysis (Wen et al., 2004, Benoit, 1995) to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: What, if any, identification inducement strategies and tactics are present in each of the six higher education campaigns?

RQ 1a: What is the frequency of these strategies and tactics?

RQ 2: What, if any, differences are present in identification inducement strategies and tactics used between traditional public universities and for-profit online educators?

Sample

A criterion sample was used for this study. A criterion sample is a purposive sample that selects exemplars based upon specific criteria that allow for generalization of a larger population (Patton, 1980). The criteria used to select the higher education strategic communication campaigns were as follows:

1. The campaign must represent strategic communication efforts of higher education institutions.
2. The campaign must include, but not be limited to, a dedicated website, video advertisement, and print advertisement.

3. The campaign must have run within the past five years.
4. The campaign components must be available for analysis.

Based upon the criteria, campaigns from three traditional four-year universities were selected: North Dakota State University's 2008-2009 *NDSU IMPACT* (NDSU IMPACT, 2009) campaign, University of Minnesota's 2006-2009 *We are all Search Engines* (University of Minnesota, 2009) campaign, and Western Michigan University's 2007-2009 *Get Behind the "W"* (Western Michigan University, 2009) campaign; and three for-profit online educators: University of Phoenix's 2009 *I am a Phoenix* (University of Phoenix, 2009) campaign, Kaplan University's 2009 *Talent* (Kaplan University, 2009) campaign, and Walden University's 2009 *Advanced Degrees Advancing the Quality of Life* (Walden University, 2009) campaign. While the six campaigns are not the only existing student recruitment campaigns, the campaign components were readily available to the public on each institution's website.

The sample includes three traditional four-year state universities and three for-profit online educators. For the purpose of this study, traditional universities are state-funded, bachelorette-granting, residential institutions; and for-profit online universities are privately owned, accredited educational institutions with curriculum offered through an online delivery method. A sample with both types of educators allows for a comparative analysis between identification inducements strategies and tactics used by traditional and online universities. The three traditional public universities in the sample, North Dakota State University, University of Minnesota, and Western Michigan University, were selected based on location, enrollment rank within each state's university system, and institutional mission. All three public universities are located in the Midwest, are one of the largest

public universities in each respective state, and are research institutions. The three for-profit online educators in the sample, University of Phoenix, Walden University, and Kaplan University, were selected based on enrollment and institutional mission. They are three of the largest online educators in the United States and are dedicated to providing education through a flexible online delivery method.

North Dakota State University

North Dakota State University (NDSU) is a public, four-year university located in Fargo, North Dakota. Founded in 1891 as a state-funded, land-grant university, NDSU is now the largest university in North Dakota with 2009 fall semester student enrollment surpassing 14,000 (NDSU, 2009). The university's mission states: "With energy and momentum, North Dakota State University addresses the needs and aspirations of people in a changing world by building on our land-grant foundation" (NDSU, 2010). The National Science Foundation acknowledges NDSU as one of the top 100 research universities in the nation, ranking 28th among all universities and colleges in Agricultural Science (NDSU, 2008). NDSU offers undergraduate, master's, doctoral, specialty and professional doctoral degrees in program areas ranging from architecture to horticulture.

The *NDSU IMPACT* campaign, a multimedia marketing and integrated communication campaign, was launched in April 2008 with the primary message:

North Dakota State University students, faculty and staff solve problems, make discoveries and improve lives. The vital work conducted here has led to extraordinary growth in North Dakota and many important innovations throughout the world. In academics, research and athletics, NDSU is a place of IMPACT (NDSU IMPACT, 2009).

The initial *NDSU IMPACT* campaign was developed to strategically address the university's image. According to Laura McDaniel, NDSU assistant vice president of University Relations, the *NDSU IMPACT* campaign was created to position the university as a state-wide entity reaching out with education and research to the global marketplace, and to differentiate the university from other higher education institutions in the marketplace. McDaniel identified the campaign's primary target audience is North Dakota students, parents, alumni, voters, and legislators.

University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota is a public, four-year university with flagship campuses located in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The state-run university also has four coordinate campuses across Minnesota in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester. Founded in 1851, the University of Minnesota is the largest university in the state with 2009 fall enrollment of 66,099 students. The university's mission is threefold:

Generate and preserve knowledge, understanding, and creativity by conducting high-quality research, scholarship, and artistic activity that benefit students, scholars, and communities across the state, the nation, and the world. Share that knowledge, understanding, and creativity by providing a broad range of educational programs in a strong and diverse community of learners and teachers, and prepare graduate, professional, and undergraduate students, as well as non-degree-seeking students interested in continuing education and lifelong learning, for active roles in a multiracial and multicultural world. Extend, apply, and exchange knowledge between the University and society by applying scholarly expertise to community problems, by helping organizations and individuals respond to their changing environments, and by making the knowledge and resources created and preserved at

the University accessible to the citizens of the state, the nation, and the world.

(University of Minnesota, 2009b).

A top-ranked research university, the University of Minnesota reported \$619.2 million in research expenditures in 2008 (University of Minnesota, 2009b). The University of Minnesota offers undergraduate, master's, doctoral, specialty and professional doctoral degrees.

The University of Minnesota launched the *We are all Search Engines* campaign in September 2006. According to a news release from the university, the campaign features an image of a computer's search bar over an image of a person asking a question to convey the spirit of inquiry found at the research-driven university (Moore, 2006). Moore said the campaign is based on the notion that "The thirst for knowledge unites all people. And that the University shares that innate sense of curiosity and urge to find the answers" (2006). The multi-media campaign includes print and web advertisements, billboards, television and radio spots, and a dedicated website targeted to Minnesota residents.

Western Michigan University

Western Michigan University (WMU) is a public, four-year university with its main campus in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Founded in 1903, the state-run university also has eight branch campuses around the state in Battle Creek, Benton, Harbor-St. Joseph, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Muskegon-Holland, South Haven and Traverse City. The university's mission states: "Western Michigan University is a student-centered research university, building intellectual inquiry, investigation, and discovery into all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. The University provides leadership in teaching, research, learning, and public service" (Western Michigan University, 2009b). WMU is one of the

largest universities in the state with 2008 fall enrollment at 24,818 students (Western Michigan University, 2009b). The university's mission is built upon research, as WMU is one of 200 research universities in the country. WMU offers undergraduate, master's, doctoral, and specialty degrees in program areas ranging from aeronautical engineers to textile and apparel studies.

Western Michigan University launched its *Get Behind the W* campaign in 2006. The campaign features print and web advertisements, television and radio spots, collateral materials, and signage emblazoned with a large gold "W" and horsehair and leather imagery. According to the university's website, the campaign's purpose is to tell potential students and their parents "to take charge of their lives and careers and to make a difference in the world" (Western Michigan University, 2009).

University of Phoenix

The University of Phoenix is the largest for-profit alternative higher education institutions in the United States reporting 420,700 students enrolled May 2009 (University of Phoenix, 2009). Founded in 1976, the University of Phoenix has 200 campuses located across the country. The university's mission states: "University of Phoenix provides access to higher education so students can develop the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their professional goals, improve the productivity of their organizations and provide leadership and service to their communities" (University of Phoenix, 2010). The University of Phoenix offers associate to doctoral degrees via online, on-campus, and hybrid instructional delivery.

The University of Phoenix launched its *I am a Phoenix* campaign with a special 60-second television spot congratulating President Barack Obama on January 20, 2009, the

day of his inauguration ceremony. The university strategically chose that historic day to begin a dialog with untraditional students like mothers, soldiers, and individuals with full-time jobs. According to its website, the integrated advertising campaign uses students, faculty, and alumni to share stories of “resilience, tenacity, and success” (University of Phoenix, 2009). The campaign includes television spots, billboards, print advertisements, and a dedicated website.

Walden University

Walden University is a for-profit, online higher education institution based in Minnesota. Founded in 1970, Walden is the flagship online university of Laureate International Universities, a network comprised of 42 online and campus-based universities in 20 countries (Walden University, 2009b). With 2008 enrollment reported at more than 33,000 students, Walden University is one of the largest online educators in the nation. The university’s mission states: “Walden University provides a diverse community of career professionals with the opportunity to transform themselves as scholar-practitioners so that they may transform society” (Walden University, 2010). Walden University offers undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral degrees via online instructional delivery.

Walden University launched its *Advanced Degrees Advancing the Quality of Life* campaign in June 2009. According to a university news release, the campaign “conveys how a Walden degree contributes to an individual’s career advancement and ability to make a valuable contribution toward positive social change” (Walden University, 2009b). The multimedia campaign features print and online advertising, television commercials, a website, and video contest. The campaign targets working professionals across the United States.

Kaplan University

Kaplan University (KU), part of Kaplan Higher Education, is a for-profit alternative educator based in Davenport, Iowa. KU has eight campuses throughout Iowa and Nebraska as well as online student support centers in Florida, Illinois, and Arizona. Founded in 1937, KU is now one of the largest universities in the nation reporting more than 48,000 students in 2008 (Kaplan University, 2009b). Kaplan University's mission states: "Kaplan University is an institution of higher learning dedicated to providing innovative undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education. Our programs foster student learning with opportunities to launch, enhance, or change careers in today's diverse global society" (Kaplan University, 2009b). KU offers undergraduate and graduate degrees, as well as continuing professional education via online and on-campus instructional delivery.

Kaplan University launched its *Talent* campaign in January 2009. According to a university news release, the campaign's purpose is to "drive awareness that many of today's college students, especially adult learners, are not well served by traditional classrooms" (Pore, 2009). Images of stay-at-home moms, professional, and adult-learners are used to portray the university's new view of the college student, while images of desks in nontraditional locations such as a backyard or beach portray the university's view of the new classroom. The campaign tagline "A different school of thought" is used to convey the university's commitment to redefining higher education (Pore). The campaign uses television commercials, print and online advertisements, and a website to target potential students across the nation.

Table 1 presents information on the six selected universities.

Table 1. Selected Universities at a Glance

	NDSU	U of M	WMU	University of Phoenix	Walden University	Kaplan University
Year Founded	1891	1851	1903	1976	1970	1937
Enrollment	14,000	66,099	24,818	420,700	33,000	48,000
Types of Degrees Conferred	Bachelor's Master's Specialist Doctoral	Bachelor's Master's Doctoral Professional	Bachelor's Master's Specialist Doctoral	Associate's Bachelor's Master's Doctoral	Bachelor's Master's Doctoral	Associate's Bachelor's Master's Professional
Number of Degree Programs	203	370	237	107	58	106
Tuition	\$227 per credit (In-State)	\$350.76 per credit (In-State)	\$3,827 flat rate for 12-16 credits (In-State)	\$530 per credit hour (bachelor's courses)	\$255 per credit hour (bachelor's courses)	\$353 per credit hour (Bachelor of Science)

Selected Texts

From the campaign sample, a total of 30 advertisements, five advertisements from each respective campaign, were included in this study. The texts were selected based on public availability and convenience. The selected texts ranged from traditional media such as print, broadcast, and outdoor to web-based advertisements. The advertisements selected from the *NDSU IMPACT* campaign include: Television ad 1, Television ad 2, IMPACT video, Radio ad, and IMPACT print ad. The advertisements selected from the University of Minnesota *We are all Search Engines* campaign are titled: Search TV, Can any good come from garbage?, Mind control, Does where I live influence what I eat?, and Is the food we eat safe? The advertisements selected from Western Michigan University's *Get Behind the "W"* campaign are titled: Grab the Reins, Dream Big, Get Behind the W, My College, and Nontraditional Student. The advertisements selected from the University of Phoenix's *I am*

a *Phoenix* campaign include: Not Believing, Children, Quality, Cherron, and Adam. The advertisements selected from the Walden University *Advanced Degrees Advancing the Quality of Life* campaign include: A Higher Purpose, Unlocking Secrets, War's Hidden Wounds, What Happens in Vegas..., and Web ad. The advertisements from Kaplan University's *Talent* campaign include: Your Time, Desks, Beach, Print ad 1, and Print ad 2. All advertisements were provided through the universities' websites.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

To answer the research questions posed, this study examines higher education strategic communication using Cheney's (1983) identification inducement typology as the guiding framework. Cheney's typology provides a framework for a two-phase thematic textual analysis to identify instances within the text consistent with identification inducement strategies and tactics as defined by Cheney. A thematic textual analysis allows the text to be analyzed for "the smallest units of a coherent idea" (Wen et al., 2004, p. 142), otherwise known as a theme (Benoit, 1995). Following the method Cheney used in his original essay analyzing employee newsletters, this study identifies strategies and tactics based on thematic units (e.g., words, titles, symbols, expressions of complete thought). In DiSanza and Bullis's (1999) study of U.S. Forest Service newsletters, the authors argue that a thematic analysis allows for a more complete analysis of the text noting that "although the tactics often appeared as sentences, they occasionally appeared as phrases or sets of sentences" (p. 54).

Each advertisement was transcribed verbatim by the primary researcher. After transcription, the full set of data was analyzed line-by-line and coded using Cheney's (1983) identification inducement typology as a guide. In the first phase of analysis, each

text was read a total of four times, once for each of Cheney's identification inducement strategies (e.g., common ground technique, identification through antithesis, assumed "we," and unifying symbols). A color-coded schematic was used to represent each strategy found within the text. In the second phase of analysis, texts previously coded as using the common ground technique were read through again a total of six times, once for each of Cheney's tactics found within the common ground technique (e.g., expression of concern for the individual, recognition of individual contributions, espousal of shared values, advocacy of benefits and activities, praise by outsiders, and testimonials by employees). Again, a color-coded schematic was used to identify words and/or phrases linked to each tactic. The two-phased analysis allowed the texts to be analyzed for both strategies and tactics found in Cheney's typology. Once the entire data set was analyzed, the thematic categories were tabulated for frequency. Any texts that did not fit within Cheney's inducement identification typology were identified and analyzed. In these cases, new categories were created and explained.

Summary

This study seeks to explore how higher education institutions use inducement strategies and tactics in external communication. To do so, a criterion sample composed of strategic communication campaigns from six universities was used. Data was coded using Cheney's (1983) typology of identification inducements as the guiding framework.

RESULTS

This study explores what identification inducement strategies and tactics are present in six higher education strategic communication campaigns. Specifically, this study uses Cheney's (1983) identification inducement typology as a framework to examine student recruitment campaigns of three public universities: North Dakota State University, University of Minnesota, and Western Michigan University; and three for-profit online universities: University of Phoenix, Walden University, and Kaplan University. This chapter presents the results of the deductive thematic textual analysis of five advertisements from each campaign, for a total of 30 selected texts. In addition to identifying strategies and tactics present within the campaigns, the study looks at the frequency of the strategies and tactics. Possible differences between the strategies and tactics used in the campaigns of traditional four-year universities and for-profit online educators are also explored.

Summative Results

To answer research question one, *what identification inducement strategies and tactics are present in each of the six higher education campaigns*, a two-phase thematic textual analysis was conducted. The 30 selected texts were reviewed line-by-line to identify instances within the text consistent with identification inducement strategies and tactics as defined by Cheney (1983). In the first phase, each text was reviewed a total of four times, once for each identification strategy. In the second phase, texts previously coded as using the common ground technique were read through again a total of six times, once for each tactic found within the common ground technique. Once the analysis was complete, the identified strategies and tactics were tabulated.

The results of this analysis showed that all four of Cheney's (1983) identification inducement strategies were used within the sample. The common ground technique was the most used strategy (n = 134), while identification through antithesis was the least used strategy (n = 7). The common ground technique was present in all six campaigns. The following was an example of this technique found within the sample: "The right program – more than 230 of them. Outstanding faculty and advising staff. Flexible offerings include evening courses, online classes, eight branch locations." Unifying symbols were also present in all six campaigns. University logos, school colors, and themed imagery are examples of unifying symbols. Assumed "we" was used in five campaigns. "We're driven to make discoveries and improve lives" is an example of this strategy. Identification through antithesis was found in three campaigns. For example, Kaplan University uses this strategy in its campaign, "...the world needs talent more than ever. Yet it's being wasted everyday by an educational system seeped in tradition and old ideas."

The results also indicated that all six tactics under the common ground technique as described by Cheney (1983) were present in the sample. Advocacy of benefits and activities was the most utilized tactic (n = 33), found in four campaigns. "Flexible offerings include evening courses, online classes, and eight branch locations" is an example of this tactic. Expression of concern for the individual and recognition of individual contributions were the least used tactics, appearing only one time each in the 30 texts. Espousal of shared values, praise by outsiders, and testimonials by employees were each identified in three campaigns.

After completing careful analysis, texts that did not fit within Cheney's (1983) inducement identification typology were identified, analyzed, and categorized. The results

from this analysis identified an additional identification strategy, the Burkean “principle of the oxymoron” (Burke, 1969) was identified. Burke defines oxymoron as “the figure that combines contradictory elements with a single expression” (p. 325). His construct of identification by oxymoron states:

Identification with physical power can call forth a transcendent feeling of personal freedom. That is, by the paradox of substance, one can imaginatively identify oneself with the mountain’s massive assertiveness while at the same time thinking of one’s own comparative futility. The identification thus gives a sense of freedom, since it transcends our limitations. (p. 325)

Boyd (2004) interprets Burke’s principle of the oxymoron as: “the oxymoron invites identification with something bigger and more powerful than the audience with whom identification is sought” (p. 47). Boyd also extends Burke’s principle of the oxymoron by positing that the oxymoron must be directional – leading only to an advanced social standing. He argues that “Organizational messages that illustrate this principle [oxymoron] must invite a change from low status to high status, or individuals will have little incentive to identify with organizational interests” (p. 68). The analysis of the text revealed that the *NDSU IMPACT* campaign uses the principle of transcendent identification through oxymoron as described by Boyd as an identification strategy. “Imagine the impact of a place where exploration leads to answers that touch everyone” is an example of how the *NDSU IMPACT* campaign uses this principle.

Two additional tactics under the common ground strategy, concern for the individual’s future and invitation, were also identified within the sample. Concern for the individual’s future is used to demonstrate the organization’s commitment to future success

of the individual, specifically the role the organization has in leading to the individual's success. "Western Michigan University will help you meet your goals," is an example of this tactic. This tactic was found in three of the six campaigns. The second additional tactic, invitation, can be described as a direct call-to-action that is commonly found in advertisements. DiSanza and Bullis (1999) added this tactic to their identification inducement scheme to account for instances when the organization made requests to individuals to join or remain involved in the organization. "Grab the reins" and "It's your time. Create an academic path that fits you" are examples of this tactic. In this sample, invitation was found in all six campaigns.

Table 2 provides a summative report of the identification inducement strategies and tactics found within the sample.

Campaign-Specific Results

NDSU IMPACT

The *NDSU IMPACT* campaign uses all five identification strategies and six tactics, excluding recognition of individual contributions and testimonials by employees. A total of 59 instances of identification strategies and 26 examples of identification tactics were identified in the five selected campaign texts. The most frequently used were common ground technique accounting for 34% (n = 29) of all strategies and tactics, espousal of shared values accounting for 20% (n = 17), and unifying symbols accounting for 18% (n = 15).

The campaign promotes shared values such as "better health," "more abundant food," and "new energy." These examples of shared values are highlighted throughout the campaign appearing in multiple advertisements. The campaign also uses an implied "we"

Table 2. Organizational Identification Inducement Strategies and Tactics

Strategies and Tactics	NDSU IMPACT	Search Engines	Get Behind the "W"	I am a Phoenix	Talent	Advanced Degrees	Total
Identification Through Antithesis	1	0	2	0	4	0	7
Assumed "We"	2	1	4	0	2	2	10
Unifying Symbols	15	15	7	10	9	2	58
Principle of Oxymoron	9	0	0	0	0	0	9
Common Ground Technique	29	10	39	28	13	15	134
Expression of Concern for the Individual	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Recognition of Individual Contributions	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Espousal of Shared Values	17	3	0	0	0	6	27
Advocacy of Benefits and Activities	5	0	23	0	4	1	33
Praise by Outsiders	2	0	2	2	0	0	6
Testimonials by Employees	0	3	0	24	0	4	31
Invitation	1	3	10	2	2	4	22
Concern for Individual's Future	3	0	4	0	7	0	14
Total	85	36	91	66	41	34	353

to identify with the audience. “Where people come together” and “teamwork” illustrate the implied “we.” The campaign suggests that it takes the collective “we” to create impact. The *IMPACT* campaign also frequently uses unifying symbols to induce identification with the audience. The university’s school colors, green and gold, saturate the advertisements along with the NDSU logo. Imagery depicting a globe, scientists, and the sun are featured in four of the five selected texts.

An additional strategy, the principle of oxymoron, was added to account for text and themes found within this campaign that did not fit Cheney’s (1983) typology. This strategy promotes transcendent identification through oxymoron. The *NDSU IMPACT* campaign “invites identification with freedom or uplifts by comparison to perceived insignificance” (Boyd, 2004, p. 50). The campaign implies that NDSU makes an impact that is seen not only in the region, but also “throughout the world.” Television ad 1 states: “Imagine the impact of a place where exploration leads to answers that touch everyone.” In addition to the verbiage, an illustration of the globe visually reinforces the concept of global impact. The *NDSU Student Demographic Information Fall 2007* reports that 87 percent of the NDSU student population comes from North Dakota and Minnesota (NDSU, 2008b). The *IMPACT* campaign implies that North Dakotans and Minnesotans are impacting the world. This takes a population that may be perceived as insignificant and contrasts it with the significant notation of global impact.

We are all Search Engines

University of Minnesota’s *We are all Search Engines* campaign uses three identification strategies: common ground technique, assumed ‘we’, and unifying symbols. The campaign utilizes four tactics, including recognition of individual contributions,

espousal of shared values, testimonials by employees, and invitation. A total of 26 instances of identification strategies and 10 examples of identification tactics were identified in the five selected campaign texts. Most frequently used were unifying symbols accounting for 42% (n = 15) of all strategies and tactics and the common ground technique accounting for 28% (n = 10).

All five text selected from the *We are all Search Engines* campaign utilize unifying symbols to induce identification. The University of Minnesota logo and school colors appear in all five texts. Imagery of a computer's search bar superimposed over a person asking a question also appears in all five text. These unifying symbols are designed to convey the spirit of inquiry found at the research-driven university, thusly inducing identification among individuals who value research and the quest for knowledge.

Get Behind the "W"

Western Michigan University's *Get Behind the "W"* campaign utilizes all four of Cheney's (1983b) identification strategies. Four tactics, advocacy of benefits and activities, praise by outsiders, invitation, and concern for individual's future, were found within the texts. A total of 52 instances of identification strategies and 39 examples of identification tactics were identified in the five selected campaign texts. Most frequently used were common ground technique accounting for 42% (n = 39) of all strategies and tactics, advocacy of benefits and activities accounting for 25% (n = 23), and invitation accounting for 11% (n = 10).

Western Michigan University's campaign makes frequent reference to benefits and activities available to university students. In the *Honors* print advertisement, the university touts its "230 graduate and undergraduate degree program," "medallion scholarships of

\$40,000 each,” “Lee Honors College – one of the nation’s oldest collegiate honors programs,” “honors seminars and senior honors theses,” and “honors housing.” These benefits and activities are used to induce identification among targeted students interested in honors programs. There are 23 instances of advocacy of benefits and activities found in this campaign.

The *Get Behind the “W”* campaign also uses unifying symbols such as a large gold collegiate “W” and horsehair and leather imagery. The “W” image appears in all of the selected advertisements with the exception of the radio ad. The horsehair and leather imagery is used to connect the advertisements with the university’s mascot, the Bronco. This imagery is found in three of the ads. Both examples of unifying symbols work in harmony with the text that falls under the invitation tactic. “Grab the reins” and “Get behind the ‘W’” are examples of the invitation tactic. These phrases communicate a direct call to action. The unifying symbols reinforce the sentiment of the invitations. Horsehair and leather says “Grab the reins” and a large collegiate “W” speaks “Get behind the ‘W.’”

I am a Phoenix

University of Phoenix’s *I am a Phoenix* campaign uses two identification strategies, common ground technique and unifying symbols. Tactics praise by outsiders, testimonials by employees, and invitation were found within the texts. A total of 38 instances of identification strategies and 28 examples of identification tactics were identified in the five selected campaign texts. Most frequently used were common ground technique accounting for 42% (n = 28) of all strategies and tactics, testimonials by employees accounting for 36% (n = 24), and unifying symbols accounting for 15% (n = 10).

The *I am a Phoenix* campaign is centered on testimonials. (For the purposes of this study, student testimonials were included in Cheney's (1983) testimonials by employees tactic.) In the television advertisement *Not Believing*, there are sound bites from nine individuals' testimonials. Four of the five selected texts are video compilations of University of Phoenix student and faculty testimonials. These advertisements concluded with the statement "I am a Phoenix."

The university's name and its logo are both unifying symbols used to induce identification. The University of Phoenix's logo portrays the image of the revered phoenix. This symbolic mythical creature has incredible significance to the University of Phoenix's organization image and brand, as it symbolizes renewed youth and remarkable strength. All five of the selected texts incorporate the university's logo and phrase "I am a Phoenix."

Talent

Kaplan University's *Talent* campaign utilizes all four of Cheney's (1983) identification strategies. Three tactics, advocacy of benefits and activities, invitation, and concern for individual's future, were found within the texts. A total of 28 instances of identification strategies and 13 examples of identification tactics were identified in the five selected campaign texts. Most frequently used were common ground technique accounting for 32% (n = 13) of all strategies and tactics, unifying symbols accounting for 22% (n = 9), and concern for individual's future accounting for 17% (n = 7).

The *Talent* campaign features the slogan "A Different School of Thought." Four of the selected advertisements use the strategy of identification through antitheses to compliment that slogan. The university attempts to unite with individuals by positioning the traditional university as the enemy. The university hopes to unite with individuals with

a new school of thought - a “different kind of university, one that’s changing rules, that comes to you, that fits in your life, even adapts to how you learn.”

The campaign uses the concern for individual’s future tactic in all five selected texts. Phrases like “What if you could get your degree to develop your talent no matter who you are or where you are,” “Someday your kids will be ready for college,” and “Ever wonder if there’s something better out there for you” are used to express concern for the individual’s future. Often, these phrases are followed by examples of the invitation tactic. “It’s your time” and “You can get started today” are examples of direct call to action following statements that express concern for the individual’s future.

Advanced Degrees Advancing the Quality of Life

Walden University’s *Advanced Degrees Advancing the Quality of Life* campaign uses three identification strategies, common ground technique, assumed ‘we’, and unifying symbols. The campaign utilizes four tactics, including recognition of espousal of shared values, advocacy of shared values, testimonials by employees, and invitation. A total of 19 instances of identification strategies and 15 examples of identification tactics were identified in the five selected campaign texts. Most frequently used were the common ground technique accounting for 44% (n = 15) of all strategies and tactics, and espousal of shared values accounting for 15% (n = 6).

The *Advanced Degrees Advancing the Quality of Life* campaign is centered on the idea that “some people don’t just work – they work to make a difference, to make an impact, to improve the lives of others.” This is an example of espousal of shared values. Five other examples of this tactic such as “It’s not about the corner office, it’s about the greater good” appear in the selected texts. The campaign also uses testimonials to induce

identification. Testimonials from accomplished alumni are used in three of the selected texts. In the Walden Story War's Hidden Wounds, alumni Major Steven Keihl says, "Walden has been a great experience for me. It was very applicable to my work."

Differences between Traditional and For-profit Universities

Research question two asked, *what, if any, differences are present in identification inducement strategies and tactics used between traditional public universities and for-profit online educators?* The results show that both traditional public universities and for-profit online educators use identification inducement strategies and tactics. The analysis reveals some similarities and differences in the use of strategies and tactics between traditional public universities and for-profit online educators. The most prominent similarity is the consistent use of the common ground technique. With the exception of the University of Minnesota's *We are all Search Engines* campaign, the common ground technique is the most used strategy in each campaign. This strategy was found a total 134 times accounting for 61% of the instances of strategies within the 30 selected texts. This finding is consistent with Cheney's (1983) analysis of employee newsletters.

Another similarity found between traditional and online universities was the use of unifying symbols. Examples of unifying symbols were identified 37 times in the three campaigns of traditional universities and 21 times in the online educators' campaigns. Proportionally, the use of this strategy is similar between traditional universities (17%) and online educators (15%).

There were, however, some striking differences between the campaigns of traditional public universities and for-profit online educators. There were 20 examples of espousal of shared values accounting for 9% of all strategies and tactics in the traditional

universities' campaigns and only six (4%) in the online educators' campaigns. Another difference was the use of the advocacy of benefits and activities tactic. Traditional universities used this tactic 28 times accounting for 13% of all strategies and tactics used versus five times (4%) in the online educators' campaigns. The most significant difference was in the use of testimonials by employees. Traditional universities used testimonials three times accounting for less than 1% of strategies and tactics used in 15 texts. In contrast, for-profit online educators had 28 examples of this tactic accounting for 20% of the strategies and tactics used. Table 3 provides a summative report of the differences between the campaigns of public universities and online educators.

Table 3. Differences between Traditional and For-Profit Universities

Strategies and Tactics	Traditional Universities	For-Profit Universities	Total
Identification Through Antithesis	3	4	7
Assumed "We"	7	4	11
Unifying Symbols	37	21	58
Principle of Oxymoron	9	0	9
Common Ground Technique	78	56	134
Expression of Concern for the Individual	1	0	1
Recognition of Individual Contributions	1	0	1
Espousal of Shared Values	20	6	26
Advocacy of Benefits and Activities	28	5	33
Praise by Outsiders	4	2	6
Testimonials by Employees	3	28	31
Invitation	14	8	22
Concern for Individual's Future	7	7	14
Total	212	141	353

Summary

The results of this study indicate that identification inducement strategies and tactics are being used in higher education strategic communication campaigns. A total of 218 identification inducement strategies and 134 tactics under the common ground technique were found within the 30 selected texts from six universities. One additional strategy, principle of oxymoron, and two additional tactics, invitation and concern for individual's future, were added to Cheney's (1983) identification inducement typology.

In answering research question two, *what, if any, differences are present in identification inducement strategies and tactics used between traditional public universities and for-profit online educators*, the results indicate that although there are some similarities there are more significant differences in the strategies and tactic use between the two types of higher education institutions. The traditional universities utilized espousal of shared values and advocacy of benefits and activities in higher proportion than online educators. The most significant difference was the use of the testimonial tactic. This tactic appeared nine times more in the for-profit online educators' campaigns. The implications of these results are further discussed in the following chapter.

DISCUSSION

This exploratory study sought to answer two research questions. First, *what, if any, identification inducement strategies and tactics are present in each of the six higher education campaigns?* Second, *what, if any, differences are present in identification inducement strategies and tactics used between traditional four-year universities and for-profit online educators?* The results provide evidence of the use of identification inducement strategies and tactics as defined by Cheney (1983) in higher education strategic communication. Specifically, the results suggest an extension of Cheney's original typology specific to external communication and differences in the use of strategies and tactics between traditional universities and for-profit online educators. The remainder of this chapter provides a discussion of the results, limitations, and future research directions.

This study used Cheney's (1983) typology of identification strategies and tactics as a template to analyze a sample of higher education recruitment campaigns. Cheney's typology was selected because it was developed to explain the process of identification induced by specific forms of appeals found within organizational communication. His research showed that these appeals (strategies and tactics) were frequently used in internal organizational communication as effective tools in fostering employee identification. The results confirmed the use of Cheney's typology of identification strategies and tactics in external organizational communication, a genre of organizational communication not included in Cheney's initial research. All four strategies and six tactics as defined by Cheney were found in the sample of higher education recruitment campaigns. The results of this study, however, suggest that Cheney's typology does not account for all the identification strategies and tactics found within higher education recruitment campaigns.

To fully account for identification appeals within the sample, one strategy and two tactics were added to Cheney's typology.

Additional Strategies and Tactics

The principle of oxymoron strategy was added to Cheney's (1983) typology to explain the identification appeals found within the *NDSU IMPACT* campaign. The textual analysis of a sample of the campaign's advertisements revealed a strategic theme not fully explained by Cheney, but consistent with Boyd's (2004) definition of transcendent identification through oxymoron. The *NDSU IMPACT* campaign centers on a theme that invites identification that is uplifting. The campaign suggests that NDSU is an institute of education that is impacting the world through education, teamwork, and innovation, teamwork. Consistent with Boyd's explanation of the principle of transcendent identification through oxymoron, the *NDSU IMPACT* campaign invites students to "identify with something higher, nobler, and better than its lot in order to paradoxically accept the identification" (p. 49).

Boyd also suggests that if used correctly the principle of transcendent identification through oxymoron can address organizational legitimacy. This is an interesting aspect of the principle as an identification inducement strategy because Cheney's (1983) typology does not address legitimacy. Research suggests that perceived organizational legitimacy, often linked to image, can effect identification in higher education institutions (Alessandi, Yang, & Kinsey, 2007; Kinsey, 2007; Kotler & Fox, 1995; Theus, 1993). According to Theus, a college's or university's image may be its most valuable asset in student recruitment and retention. Effectively conveying the perceived organizational legitimacy may be an extremely useful strategy in higher education communication. The *NDSU*

IMPACT campaign uses the principle of oxymoron strategy to illustrate institutional legitimacy. By positioning the university as an institution of growth through research, the campaign legitimizes NDSU as a top research university. The principle of oxymoron can be a potent strategy in higher education recruitment campaigns as it invites identification and conveys organizational legitimacy.

The analysis of the sample also yielded two additional identification tactics found within the common ground strategy. First is the invitation tactic. DiSanza and Bullis (1999) identified this tactic in their study of employee newsletters. They describe the invitation tactic is a call to action for individuals to make the move and become a member of or continue to support the organization. All six campaigns that were analyzed in this campaign used the invitation tactic. However, the instances identified as invitation in the sample take on a slightly different meaning than that posited by DiSanza and Bullis. Because higher education recruitment campaigns are attempting to induce identification among individuals who would enter into a reverse paid relationship with the organization, the invitation tactic is similar to the closing remarks of a sales pitch. The tactic invites invitation by urging potential students to take the next step in become members of the organization. DiSanza and Bullis do not define invitation through a sales perspective. The second tactic added to the typology is referred to as concern for the individual's future. This tactic is not found in the existing research on identification inducement strategies and tactics, but emerged as a common theme in the analysis of the six selected recruitment campaigns. This tactic may be unique to higher education communication because of the nature of colleges and universities.

This research provides initial evidence of an identification inducement typology specific to higher external strategic communication. It is an extension of Cheney's (1983) typology that adds to our understanding of the strategies and tactics organizations use in external communication to induce identification. Specifically, a typology such as this could provide higher education communication practitioners a framework for recruitment campaigns that effectively invite identification with their college or university.

The results of this research also provide initial evidence that organizations use strategies and tactics to inducement identification among individuals other than employees. The current identification inducement research focuses on employer-employee communication. This study begins to address this limitation by exploring the strategies and tactics used to induce identification among individuals who would enter into a reverse paid relationship with the organization. The results indicate that in addition to employee retention and loyalty, identification inducement strategies are used to recruit students, an audience that pays the organization. This finding extends Cheney's (1983) typology to include communication to individuals in a reverse paid relationship with the organization.

Traditional Versus Online

After identifying and quantifying the strategies and tactics used in the sample, the results were compared to determine if there are similarities and differences in identification strategies and tactics used in campaigns of traditional universities and online educators. The results suggested that both types of higher education institutions used identification strategies and tactics, but differing patterns of use and intended purpose of the strategies and tactics were evident. This is not a surprising result due to factors such as dissimilar target audiences, disparities in budgets for recruitment campaigns, and differences in

academic, residential, and student life offerings. However, one area of similarity worth noting is the common use of unifying symbols to manage university image and brand. In higher education, Alessandri, Yang, and Kinsey (2007) define image as the public's impression based directly on perceptions of the university's identity, which they define as "a university's identity is its strategically planned and purposeful presentation of itself in order to gain a positive image in the minds of the public" (p. 259). According to Theus (1993), a college's or university's image may be its most valuable asset in student recruitment and retention. Based on the analysis from the 30 selected texts, it is evident that both traditional universities and online educators used symbols in this capacity.

While both types of universities used the unifying symbols strategy proportionally and to manage image, the meanings of the symbols are much different. The analysis of the texts indicates that the traditional universities utilized symbols to convey tradition, legacy, and school pride, while online educators used symbols to convey progress and transformation. The difference in the use of unifying symbols is evident when comparing WMU's *Get Behind the "W"* campaign to University of Phoenix's *I am a Phoenix* campaign. WMU advertisements incorporate a traditional, collegiate W – similar in style to a letter sewed on a letterman's sweater or jacket. This symbol is easily identified as collegiate and invokes a feeling of nostalgia. The *I am a Phoenix* campaign used a modern graphic of the phoenix, an iconic symbol of rebirth and renewal. The phoenix symbolizes a new beginning and progress, not tradition. This strategy takes on a much different meaning for the online educator. It is likely that the difference in the use of this strategy between the two types of universities can be explained by comparing target audiences. The traditional universities most likely targeted what would be considered traditional college students –

recent high school graduates. This audience may respond positively to well-known collegiate symbols that depict tradition and school pride. The online educators most likely targeted non-traditional students, which may include old-than-average students, full-time workers, and parents. To this audience, tradition isn't as appealing as progress.

Another difference between traditional universities and online educators is in the use of the advocacy of benefits and activities. The traditional universities used this tactic to convey the perceived advantages of a traditional bricks and mortar university. Residence halls, extra curricular activities, student clubs and organizations, and accessible faculty members are some of the benefits and activities highlighted. It is likely that traditional universities used this strategy more than online educators because it appeals to their primary target audience of recent high school graduates looking for a full, well-rounded collegiate experience. Traditional universities are selling the experience as much as the education. When the for-profit educators utilized this strategy, the message focused on the benefits of flexible delivery options, which appeals to their target audience of non-traditional students.

A final difference in the use of strategies and tactics between the two types of universities was in the use of testimonials by employees. This tactic accounted for 20% of the strategies and tactics used in the for-profit online educators' campaigns compared to less than 1% in the traditional universities' campaigns. The University of Phoenix used testimonials in all five texts, including multiple testimonials in three of the texts. Walden University's campaign featured "Walden Stories," which were lengthy testimonials from successful students and alumni. It is likely this tactic was used by for-profit online educators to relate with their target audience. From working mothers to returning students,

the testimonials are used to connect with the non-traditional students by sending that message that they too could earn a degree.

Future Differences

In the 2006 Chronicle of Higher Education article *Marketing, the For-Profit Way*, author Goldie Blumenstyk suggested that traditional universities are beginning to adopt for-profit educators marketing strategies such as Internet recruiting, pay per click Web advertising campaigns, online-directory companies, and telemarketing. It is evident that the delivery medium of higher education strategic communication is shifting. The results of this study provide preliminary evidence that although traditional universities are beginning to market like for-profit educators, the identification inducement appeals used in the communication is much different.

The significance of research question two is to begin to explore whether or not the identification process works the same for students who attend traditional universities versus students who are enrolled in classes from online educators. From a practical perspective, this allows for way to assess communication used to recruit students as the for-profit online educator sector continues to boom and more students choose online learning. As online education continues to grow, it will be interesting to see if traditional universities begin to shift identification strategies and tactics used to recruit students to follow this trend.

Limitations and Future Research

This exploratory study presents at least three limitations that present directions for future research. First, this study has a small sample size ($n = 6$). Second, the text is not inclusive of all campaign communication from each university. Third, the study is temporally bound.

This study examined external communication from six universities including three traditional, four-year universities and three for-profit online educators. This sample represents only a fraction of higher education institutions across the country. A larger sample size might yield different results. Also, the sample does not represent all types of higher education institutions (e.g. public two-year colleges, private non-profit universities, religious institutions). It would be useful to know if different types of higher education institutions use different identification inducement strategies and tactics. Also, it would be useful to explore similarities in the use of strategies and tactics across all types of higher education institutions. Doing so, would allow for a more complete understanding of how higher education, as a genre, uses strategic communication to recruit students.

Second, the selected texts were not inclusive of all the campaign communication from each university. Five advertisements from each campaign were selected and analyzed based on public availability. The selected advertisements did not necessarily represent each university's campaign in its entirety. It is possible that the strategies and tactics used in television ads may be different than the ones used in web advertisements. Examining all campaign advertisements could possibly yield a more complete analysis of the strategies and tactics found in higher education strategic communication.

Third, this study is temporally bound. As indicated previously, this is a period of uncertain times for higher education due to the economic downturn and competitive marketplace. It is conceivable that higher education institutions used different communication strategies and tactics to recruit students in different economic climates and markets. Also, higher education recruitment campaigns often change from one year to the next. Ongoing research and post-campaign feedback help colleges and universities craft

effective strategic communication. This may mean fine-tuning existing or creating new communication. A longitudinal study of higher education strategic communication could provide further insights into the identification inducement strategies used in higher education strategic communication.

This study opens the door to many areas of future research beyond those that emerged from the limitations. This study sought to answer whether or not identification inducements were being used in higher education strategic communication. With the results indicating that, indeed, identification inducement strategies and tactics are being used, a logical extension of this work would be to explore how potential students respond to communication from universities that include identification inducements. Student focus groups or surveys could be used to gather student responses to the campaigns. This research direction could explore whether or not identification inducement strategies and tactics actually start the identification process among potential students, and if so, identify which strategies and tactics are more effective in the inducement process. Further research could then examine the results that occur from the advertisements that include identification inducements. This information could give a complete explanation of how communication affects identification in the student recruitment process.

Another direction of future research that is suggested by this study is to examine the ethical implications of using identification inducement strategies and tactics in higher education recruitment campaigns. Communication to external audiences is an invitation to identification that may or may not be transparent. Strategic communication may be arranged in ways that compel individuals to consciously or unconsciously move to act. In this study's sample, the University of Phoenix used testimonials from non-traditional

students to speak of personal challenges they faced while working their degrees: “I’d be online at twelve midnight with my daughter in one arm and typing with one,” “I had to think in English when I could barely speak it,” and “I was out of school for 37 years.” Testimonials from working mothers, minorities, and older than average students were strategically used along with the phoenix, a symbol of renewed youth. Instances of unifying symbols, concern for the individual’s future, and testimonials such as this can be an abstraction from the ultimate motive of the institution, which in the case of for-profit educators, is dollars. The University of Phoenix, Walden University, and Kaplan University along with other for-profit educators are in the business of education. Students are customers and educational degrees are the product. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, the University of Phoenix is a \$10-billion company (Bartlett, 2009). Traditional, non-profit public universities are being forced to run “like” businesses to compete with online educators to meet enrollment targets. This change has spurred heated debate over whether or not higher education institutions should turn profits (Bartlett). As the line between education and business becomes increasingly blurred, future research should examine the ethics behind these campaigns that target vulnerable populations to act or think differently by employing specific identification inducement strategies and tactics. Research could explore if higher education strategic communication has become a tool of manipulation to turn profit rather than an informational tool to help students make informed decisions.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the research on identification inducement strategies and tactics used in organizational communication by extending Cheney’s (1983) original

typology to account for identification appeals used in higher education strategic communication used to recruit students. Added to Cheney's typology is the strategy identification through oxymoron and tactics invitation and concern for the individual's future. This adds to our understanding of how organizations use external communication to induce identification among individuals in a reverse paid relationship with the organization.

The findings of this study have practical implications for higher education communication practitioners. First, colleges and universities know how vital it is to maintain student enrollment. To do this, the organizations continue to invest large amounts of time and money in strategic communication used to recruit students. This study offers higher education institutions insight into the role of identification in the student recruitment process and strategies and tactics that may help create more effective recruitment campaigns. Second, as the landscape of higher education continues to evolve, so does the communication used to recruit students. This study presents the differences in strategies and tactics used in campaigns from traditional universities and for-profit educators. Traditional universities can use this information to learn how for-profits are communicating to potential students, and vice versa. As universities and colleges across the country invest millions of dollars in strategic communication campaigns, understanding competitors' strategies can be valuable tool in the competitive higher education marketplace.

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APPENDIX

North Dakota State University's *NDSU IMPACT* Campaign

Television Ad 1 – 30 Second Television Advertisement

Define. The Problem. The Solution. The Potential. The Future. Define Yourself. Discover. Strength. Technology. Creativity. Opportunity. Resources. Dream. What's possible/impossible/important/influential/next. What you can become. A universe of ideas. Imagine the IMPACT. NDSU IMPACT. www.ndscs.edu.

Television Ad 2 – 30 Second Television Advertisement

Imagine the impact [research] of a place where [better health] exploration leads [bigger breakthroughs] to answers that touch [more abundant food] everyone. Where resources [fresh discoveries] and resourcefulness, teamwork [new energy] and tenacity, combine to open new frontiers [a better future]. Where dreams take the lead [Imagine the IMPACT] and show you tomorrow [NDSU IMPACT www.ndscs.edu].

IMPACT Video

Imagine [Imagine the Impact] the impact [NDSU Impact] when people work together to bring about remarkable transformation, expanded programs, growth in research, increasing enrollment [30% enrollment growth], world-class competition [Division-I athletics], a universe of ideas – this is NDSU. NDSU is a public land grant, doctoral-granting university that is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. We're driven to make discoveries and improve lives through the dedicated efforts of our eight colleges [Pharmacy, Nursing & Allied Science/University Studies/Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences/Business Administration/Science and Mathematics/Engineering and Architecture/Human Development and

Education/Agriculture]. Currently experiencing its eighth straight year of enrollment growth, the vital work being conducted here has led to extraordinary growth in North Dakota and many important innovations throughout the world. NDSU reported [\$103.8 Million] \$103.8 million [research] in research [better health] expenditures to the [bigger breakthroughs] National Science Foundation in fiscal year 2006 [more abundant food]. That number ranks NDSU as [Top 20% of universities in research expenditures] 127th out of 640 research universities in the U.S. and its territories. Important work in agriculture, genetics, health, energy and business has led to many remarkable discoveries that help to address many global challenges. NDSU is comprised of 100 buildings covering 41 city blocks in Fargo, North Dakota, the largest metro area between Minneapolis and Spokane. Fargo is recognized as one of the safest, cleanest cities in the United States, with superb amenities, low cost of living and a quality of life that ranks among the best in the nation. North Dakota State [Students. Faculty. Business. Research. Community.] is a renowned university experiencing a remarkable period of growth [Creating opportunity.] and expanded academic opportunities. An institution committed to progress, NDSU continues to advance in all areas because of the energy and dedication of faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends. This is a place of impact [Imagine the IMPACT]. This is NDSU [NDSU IMPACT].

Radio Advertisement

Imagine the impact of a place where tomorrow's innovations are happening right now. Where exploration and research lead to answers - better health, more abundant food, new energy. That place is closer than you think. That place is North Dakota State University. To find out more visit ndsu.edu.

IMPACT Print Advertisement

Make discoveries. Dream what you can become. Improve lives. Solve problems.
 Define yourself. Discover opportunity. Imagine the IMPACT. NDSU IMPACT.
www.ndsu.edu.

University of Minnesota's *We are all Search Engines* Campaign

Search TV – 60 Second Television Advertisement

So I guess, I was just wondering, what kinds of technologies are in development right now to help keep our troops safe? [Search: Life-saving technology?] [Search: Results in 15 seconds] Good question. The answer – robots. At the U of M, my students and I are building and testing them to be the eyes and ears for soldiers. Robots can put distance between humans and harm. Some are being used over seas right now. They'll never completely replace humans, but they can help save lives. So the search continues. Hello. Learn more and submit your greatest question [University of Minnesota] [Search: Your greatest question.] at umn.edu [Driven to Discover] [umn.edu]

Can any Good Come from Garbage? – 30 Second Television Advertisement

My name is Brian Bell from the U of M. We're trying to help the people of Haiti. Plastic bags and garbage litter the streets – it's everywhere. [Search: Can any good come from garbage?] Using a solar cooker and the sun's energy, our team has discovered how to melt the plastic into products Haitians can use - giving them the tools to improve their lives. So the search continues. [More at umn.edu]

Mind Control – 30 Second Television Advertisement

Is mind control possible? [Search: Harnessing brainpower?]. Mow the lawn. Great question. The answer might be here. At the University of Minnesota my students and I are

using the thinking cap and neuro-control technology to play a computer game with only the mind. Nice job. In the near future we hope this will enable people with artificial limbs to move them just by thinking about them. So the search continues. Learn more at umn.edu.

Does where I Live Influence What I Eat? – Print Advertisement

Search: Does where I live influence what I eat? Search Results: The politics of produce. U of M assistant professor of history Tracey Deutsch studies the origins of supermarkets. She's found that transportation, population shifts, social trends and policy intertwine to determine where supermarkets are opened. So over time, middle-class neighborhoods often gain better access to fresh foods and vegetables than poorer areas. Knowing this helps policymakers, citizens and retailers also look at access to healthy food, rather than only taste and preferences, to confront issues of obesity and malnutrition. Not exactly your garden-variety research. So the search continues. Learn more and submit your single greatest question at umn.edu. University of Minnesota Driven to Discover.

Is the Food We Eat Safe? – Web Flash Advertisement

Search: Is the food we eat safe? Search: Can we be profitable and socially responsible? Search: How can we understand the brain? We are all search engines. University of Minnesota Driven to Discover.

Western Michigan University's *Get Behind the "W"* Campaign

Grab the Reins – 33 Second Television Advertisement

They come from all over – from north and south, from the Midwest and the Far East. They come to study, to learn the ropes, to graduate with honors, with tools that will serve them in life. Because it was here that we learn what was, what is, and what could be. Western Michigan University. Grab the Reins.

Dream Big – 60 Second Radio Advertisement

Meet Larry. Hey. Larry is a high school senior and he has big dreams. I don't want to wear a tie to work. Ok Larry, that's a good start, but at Western Michigan University you can set your sights a little higher than that. Uh, I want to own a boat. Ok, better, but this is Western Michigan University with over 230 programs to choose from and renowned faculty from around the world you can go even bigger. I'm interested in planets. Uh-ha, did I mention that U.S. News and World Report named Western Michigan University one of America's top universities ten years running. I want to develop transportation to other planets. That's better. I want to develop sustainable living conditions on Mars. Good. I want to develop a teleporter to another galaxy and name it Larrytron and have jet packs that run on garbage. Larry my boy, now you're thinking like a Bronco. They could come in different colors and have touch screens. Grab the reins. Dream big at Western Michigan University. Visit wmich.edu.

Get Behind the W – Print Advertisement

Get behind the W. 25,000 students arrive on the WMU campus each fall. Some are encouraged by the choice of more than 230 programs. Others are intrigued by the out-of-classroom experiences they encounter. Many enroll in the Western Edge, a pact that helps students finish in four years. One thing is certain, WMU gives students what they need to succeed. Want to be a Bronco? Grab the reins and ask for more information about how you can get behind the W. Call (269) 387-4310 or e-mail registrar-info@wmich.edu

My College – Print Advertisement

Get behind the W. Western Michigan University will help you meet your goals. You'll enjoy the resources of a national research university along with the one-on-one

contact and personal touch of a close-knit honors college. One of the nation's top-100 public universities. More than 230 graduate and undergraduate degree programs. Top applicants compete for medallion scholarships of \$40,000 each. Lee Honors College – one of the nation's oldest collegiate honors programs. WMU academic home to more than 1,000 students. Honors seminars and senior honors theses. Honors housing in campus residence halls. Requirements: High school GPA of 3.6; ACT 26; SAT 1170 (math plus critical reading).

Nontraditional Student – Print Advertisement

Want to start or finish your degree? Need to be ready for a job change or promotion? Wherever you are, WMU is there for you. Get behind the W. Enroll at WMU this fall. The first step is the hardest, but we're ready to help you take it and be a success. It doesn't matter how many years since you finished high school or when you last looked into college course work. We can help you plot a course that will lead you to the degree you need. The right program – more than 230 of them. Outstanding faculty and advising staff. Flexible offerings include evening courses, online classes, eight branch locations. Experienced staff to help you explore financial aid. www.wmich.edu/registrar/adultstudents. Call (269) 387-4310 or e-mail registrar-info@wmich.edu.

University of Phoenix's *I am a Phoenix* Campaign

Not Believing – 62 Second Television Advertisement

There were several people who had doubts about whether or not I should attempt to go to school. Working full time and being a single parent was difficult enough. I'd be online at twelve midnight with my daughter in one arm and typing with one. A lot of days I worked on two, three hours of sleep. There were always distractions. Time was my greatest

enemy; there was never enough of it. I had to think in English when I could barely speak it. I was out of school for 37 years. I was still working 40, 50 hours. It was challenging. When people try to tell me I can't do something. I'm the type of guy who likes to prove people wrong. My name is Adam. And I am a Phoenix. Saluting those who defy the odds.

Congratulations, Mr. President.

Children – 30 Second Television Advertisement

Mommy do you have class tonight? My five-year-old son was truly pushing me. My motivation hands-down was my son. My boys would hug me and be like "You can do it." I'd be online at twelve midnight with my daughter in one arm and typing with one. I needed to show my children that I could do this. If I can do it, they can do it. There's no excuse. My name is Adam. Connie. Michael. Wendy. And I am a Phoenix. Mommy you need to do your homework.

Quality – 30 Second Television Advertisement

It was challenging. Nothing about school is easy. My degree has given me confidence. Self esteem. A global perspective. You're just better at life when you are prepared at that level. Finishing my education, it unlocked a lot of potential in who I am. You could throw anything at me and I feel that I could take it on. Today you know more than yesterday and that's the key. My name is Wendy. Rick. Natalia. And I am a Phoenix.

Cherron – Print Advertisement

I am a Phoenix. Being the first in your family to earn a degree teaches you one thing – how to work independently. Like quite a few of my fellow graduates, I'm the first in my family to receive a college education – a fact in which my family and I take pride. We understand the meaning of determination in the face of a challenge. University of

Phoenix graduates aren't simply prepared with classroom theory; we're equipped with life experience. Cherron Class of 2008. To learn more about Cherron and other University of Phoenix students visit iamaphoenix.com. University of Phoenix is a fully accredited institution of higher learning.

Adam – Print Advertisement

I am a Phoenix. Most employees talk about dedication; servicemen and servicewomen know what it is to live it. Like me, a number of my fellow University of Phoenix graduates are either current or former military personnel. Our training has instilled in us qualities that can't be gained through civilian life. The qualities that make us good soldiers also make us good employees. University of Phoenix graduates aren't simply prepared with classroom theory; we're equipped with life experience. Adam Class of 2008. To learn more about ADAM and other University of Phoenix students visit iamaphoenix.com. University of Phoenix is a fully accredited institution of higher learning.

Walden University's *Advancing the Quality of Life* Campaign

A Higher Purpose – 60 Second Television Advertisement

Some people don't just work – they work to make a difference, to make an impact, to improve the lives of others. There are people in great positions of power, the power to effect change. For them, career advancement is a goal, but not the only goal. For them, it is not about money, although money is always nice. It's not about a corner office; it's about a greater good. There's a school for people like this – an online university where advanced degrees advance the quality of life. Walden University. A higher degree, a higher purpose [Walden University (logo) A higher degree. A higher purpose.]

Unlocking Secrets – Website Walden Story

You can read Nancy Musarra's Ph.D. dissertation on the face of every child she helps. At Walden University, we believe research shouldn't gather dust sitting on a library shelf. Instead, we expect our students to apply their research immediately. Just as Nancy Musarra, Walden Ph.D. in Psychology has done working with children with Asperger's Disorder. Asperger's is characterized by a range of delays in different developmental changes. It's more common in males, and typically diagnosed in later childhood, between the ages of 11 and 13. Those with the disorder have average or above-average intelligence and language development, but have difficulty using and understanding non-verbal communication. As a result, they struggle to form relationships and lack social confidence. "It's a difficult diagnosis to make," says Dr. Musarra, a therapist and behavioral health consultant in Ohio. "Parents often notice that something 'isn't quite right' with their child, but can't identify it." As part of her dissertation, Dr. Nancy Musarra identified a connection between working-memory capacity—the brain's ability to temporarily store information—and the poor social skills exhibited by children with the disorder. Her findings suggest that if psychologists and educators target remedial efforts to enhance working-memory capacity, persons with Asperger's may more effectively engage in complex information processing and participate more effectively in reciprocal social interactions. Dr. Musarra won the Harold L. Hodgkinson Award, presented annually to a Walden graduate whose dissertation meets the highest university standards. "My dissertation committee continually raised the bar throughout the study," Dr. Musarra said. "Considering where that took me, I'm glad they did." You can make a positive difference in the lives of others. And you can start today at Walden University.

War's Hidden Wounds – Website Walden Story

Major Steven Keihl is helping soldiers adjust to a new battleground: Everyday life. For many soldiers, returning home to civilian life after a tour of duty in Iraq or Afghanistan can be difficult. And without help, navigating the readjustment can be treacherous—for soldiers and for their loved ones. Major Steven Keihl, who is director of mental health for the California National Guard, served 16 months in Iraq and knows firsthand the particular challenges these combat veterans face. Keihl completed his M.S. in Psychology at Walden in the spring of 2008 and is continuing on for a Ph.D. in Psychology with a specialization in Health Psychology. “Dealing with the reintegration needs of our soldiers returning from Iraq is a personal and professional passion,” Keihl says. “I struggled with a lot of those issues myself.” Challenges faced by returning soldiers include posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—about which, Keihl says, “there is a lot of misinformation”—and other mental health issues, caused in part by long combat time. “In WWII, the actual combat time was less than 100 days a year,” Keihl explains, “and right now the average Iraqi Freedom combatant is engaged 221 days a year. “We make sure we tell [soldiers] that it’s normal for normal people exposed to abnormal events to struggle with readjustment to the world they come back to—[particularly] socially, with primary relationships. They feel lost, like they don’t belong,” he says. Depression and suicide are among the risks for returning soldiers. In fact, Keihl notes that the Army suicide rate in 2007 was the highest in 26 years, according to the Department of Defense. Returning soldiers from the National Guard and the Army Reserve are at a particular disadvantage because they don't have the same support resources as active duty personnel, and they must reintegrate into a civilian lifestyle, often facing insensitivity. “Someone [at their civilian job] asks them, ‘Did you kill anybody?’

and that's the last question they want to answer," says Keihl. He and just three other full-time staff members are charged with managing clinical services for 22,000 California National Guard soldiers. Therefore, he says, "We do not provide clinical services; we connect soldiers to the various agencies that can help them. We hand-walk people through the process, and make sure they get the treatment they need." Keihl oversees six programs and participates in six others, covering issues ranging from suicide prevention to marriage issues and financial problems. They also have an "Embed Program," in which civilians train with troops and address mental health issues "right on the ground level," Keihl explains. "No other state has that." Keihl has found that what he learned in his Walden courses—for example, on the topics of memory and learning and traumatic brain injury—"informed the training the soldiers got throughout the state of California." And his research design and statistics class affected how he gathered information for a research project for the state of California. "Walden has been a great experience for me," he says. "It was very applicable to my work." He also notes that for military personnel like himself, who travel so much, Walden's flexibility is key: "I did one month of the program when I was deployed out of the country," he says. "As long as you have a laptop and Internet access, you can make this work." You can make a positive difference in the lives of others. And you can start today at Walden University.

What Happens in Vegas... – Website Walden Story

Lots of people hit bottom in Las Vegas. Charles Bolin is using his Walden education to help them rise back up. When most people think of the infamous Las Vegas Strip, they imagine stories and characters straight out of a Hollywood screenplay: teenage runaways, high-stepping showgirls, fortunes made and broken in a single night, greed,

desperation—all the extremes of human experience. According to Chaplain Charles Bolin, who's earning his Ph.D. in Psychology from Walden University, those stereotypes are not far removed from the truth. In his 14 years working on the Strip as chaplain at the Riviera Hotel and Casino, he heard innumerable stories filled with all the drama of a classic film noir. "I helped a lot of people through distressing times," he says. Bolin first thought of becoming a chaplain after he read *The Cross and the Switchblade* by David Wilkerson, a story about a country preacher who ministered to juvenile delinquents on the mean streets of New York in the 1960s. "But I didn't want to work in a church," he says. "I prefer pastoral counseling and crisis intervention. I think it's a great way to make a difference in people's lives, to reach out to them when they are at their harshest crisis point and need help the most." After graduating from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., Bolin moved to Las Vegas. He was enlisted by the Church On The Strip to provide backstage Bible study courses for dancers and stagehands. He also became a chaplain with the Air Force Reserve. "After 9/11, I began to see how many people were using religion and spirituality to cope with traumatic events like terrorism, and I realized we need to bring theology and psychology together," he says. "I already had a master's degree in divinity, but wanted a 'secular' degree, to have credibility in the mental health community as well as the theological community. So in 2003, I enrolled in the doctoral specialization in Health Psychology at Walden." Bolin says that Dr. Wayne Lever, the chair for his dissertation, was especially helpful. "He offered courses dealing with medical crisis counseling and grief therapy," Bolin says. "That was right up my alley, and the courses were so powerful." Bolin completed his coursework in December 2007 and is working on his dissertation, *Spiritual and Religious Coping for Traumatic Stress*. Pointing out that 59

percent of people will turn to a faith-based resource when faced with a traumatic life event, Bolin says it's especially important that chaplains are adequately trained. You can gain the academic credentials you need to make a bigger difference in the lives of others. And you can start today at Walden University.

Web Ad – Website ad

Change lives, including your own. Some people don't just work, they work to make a difference. Find out how you can change your world, starting today.

Kaplan University's *Talent* Campaign

Your Time – 60 Second Television Advertisement

I stand before you today to apologize. The system has failed you. I have failed you. I have failed to help you share your talent with the world and the world needs talent more than ever. Yet it's being wasted everyday by an educational system seeped in tradition and old ideas. It's time for a new tradition. It's time to realize that talent isn't just in schools like this one, it's everywhere. It's time to use technology to re-write the rule of education. To learn how you learn so we can teach you better. It's time the university learns to adapt to you rather than you adapt to it. It's time, time, time for a different, different university. It's your time.

Desks – 60 Second Television Advertisement

Where is it written that the old way is the right way? Where is it written that a traditional education is the only way to get an education? Where is it written that classes only take place in a classroom? What if you could get your degree to develop your talent no matter who you are or where you are? What if there was a different kind of university, one that's changing rules, that comes to you, that fits in your life, even adapts to how you learn.

Where is it written that you can't change your life? That's just the thing, it isn't written anywhere.

Beach – 15 Second Television Advertisement

Ever wonder if there's something better out there for you? A better job? A better career? Maybe it's time to stop wondering.

Print Advertisement 1

The world needs talent. Your talent. The talent within you can make a big difference around you. But first it must be recognized. At Kaplan University, we customize learning to fit the way you learn, so that anyone with talent can develop it. We're an accredited university, with more than 100 degrees and programs. It's time to rewrite the rules of education. It's your time. Create an academic path that fits you. Take your free learning assessment. Find out more at kaplan.edu/talent.

Print Advertisement 2

Who says a full-time mom doesn't have time to be a full-time student? Juggling kids and a job doesn't leave much time to further your career. We can help. Kaplan University is accredited, with more than 100 degrees and programs. Plus, we offer flexible schedules along with a supportive online community of students and faculty. Someday your kids will be ready for college. You can get started today. Create an academic path that fits you. Take your free learning assessment. Find out more at kaplan.edu/talent.