SDSU Career Services:
Promotional Mix

May 6, 2003

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Career Services at San Diego State University offers a wide variety of services to many users. The current promotional mix that Career Services uses to raise awareness and generate interest in their services includes personal selling, direct e-mails & mailings, PR/publicity activities, and media advertising.

For quite some time CS has been facing the question why less than half of the SDSU student population uses its services. To answer this question, our market research team has established a management problem (How can SDSU Career Services increase the number of users and reinforce its usage among current SDSU students through a more effective promotional mix?) and a marketing problem (How effective are CS’s current promotional mix elements and what promotional mix changes could lead to an increase in the number of users and the usage of CS?) to be addressed. Further more, research objectives were geared towards determining awareness levels, usage behavior, success of the promotional mix, identification of barriers to use, and potential ways of improving the promotional mix.

This research project was approached predominantly with primary data collection that included six individual interviews, two focus groups, and a paper-and-pencil survey. Extensive secondary research was performed and proved valuable in forming a more complete picture of CS, especially its promotional mix and advertising. 500 hard copies of the survey were printed, 447 of them were distributed and 437 were returned. After evaluating the completeness of these returned surveys, our final sample size became 321.

Survey analysis findings were predominantly in line with qualitative feedback and agreed that awareness levels are high, usage is limited to juniors and seniors, the promotional mix is only somewhat successful, and barriers such as a perceived lack of emailing and a common misperception about who CS is for exist.

Recommendations are categorized into two main themes: the need to “re-educate” SDSU students and eliminate the pervasive misperceptions that exist about what CS can do for them and when they should go, and the need to restructure the current promotional mix to reflect the findings of this research in terms of the popularity and demand for email and other promotional channels. Specifically, (1) focus promotions around clearly stating what Career Services does and what benefits exist for each class level, (2) focus simple, eye-catching promotions that outline the many services that CS offers and where more information can be found, (3) place email as the number one channel for CS promotions and information dissemination, (4) increase frequency of promotions to increase overall awareness about ongoing CS activities, (5) Improve friendliness of CS receptionist staff, and (6) Reduce bureaucracy within CS to improve timeliness of processes.
Overview: SDSU Career Services

Career Services (CS), a department of the Division of Student Affairs at San Diego State University (SDSU), has been operating since the 1950s. Its mission is to “contribute to academic and personal success, encourage independent civic responsibility, and promote the welfare of all students” (Mission Statement, 2003). Some selected facts from the 2001-2002 Career Services Annual Report (2003) showed that CS had 418,058 contacts utilizing its services (i.e. reception area patron count), career counseling appointments numbered 4,829, and workshop attendance reached 11,503.

CS offers a wide variety of services to (1) current SDSU students, (2) SDSU/CSU alumni, (3) recruiters & employers, (4) graduates of other universities, (5) parents, and (6) faculty & staff. These services are intended to help registrants establish a strong start towards a successful career and provide assistance to find employment. CS also aids employers in finding suitable job candidates among CS registrants and promotes job opportunities at their places of employment. Current SDSU students have always been the primary target group for CS promotions and advertising. Services geared towards SDSU students include career counseling, Aztec Career Connection, job & internship listings, employment interviews, and workshops (Career Services, 2003).

Current Promotional Mix

The current promotional mix that Career Services uses to raise awareness and generate interest in their services includes personal selling, direct e-mailings & mailings, PR/publicity activities, and media advertising.

Personal Selling

1. **In-class presentations by CS ambassadors**: Throughout the semester, CS ambassadors visit and give brief presentations about service offerings provided at CS and urge students to use the services offered at CS. These presentations occur approximately 20 times per semester.

2. **Gradfest and Senior Send-off**: These are 3-day events sponsored by CS every spring that serve to induce graduating students into availing themselves of CS.
Direct E-Mail & Mailings
1. CS regularly sends emails to its registrants as a reminder of upcoming CS activities.
2. CS also sends “snail-mail” to non-registrants to invite them to register with their office. Flyers are also sent out to those students who have accumulated 90+ units and are close to graduation as another invitation to visit and register with CS.

PR/ Publicity Activities
1. **Future Aztec’s Day**: Each year in mid-April, the SDSU Office of Student Recruitment and School Relations sponsors a free, rain or shine event called Future Aztec’s Day. Here, prospective students learn about the requirements, benefits, and opportunities of being a student at SDSU. Informational topics covered include an overview of academic programs, financial aid information, and special programs to help students succeed among others. CS is represented (“Future Aztec’s Day”, 2003).
2. **Career Fairs**: Career Fairs give CS an opportunity to generate interest in their office and also a chance to register unregistered students via a computer at their booth. CS also uses the Monster Truck (MonsterTrak powers CS job listings) to catch attention. There are six fairs scheduled for Spring 2003.
3. **New Student Orientation**: New Student Orientation is a full-day program held on several different dates during the summer. At this orientation, incoming students can gain a better understanding of CS, general education, major, testing, and graduation requirements (University Admissions and Records, 2003).

Media Advertising
1. **Print advertisement in the Daily Aztec**: Throughout the semester CS takes out ads in the Daily Aztec student newspaper to promote upcoming CS events. These are placed for a minimum of 34 days of advertising a year in coordination with upcoming career fairs.
2. **Flyers**: Flyers that detail CS offerings and dates are printed and placed throughout campus in order to generate both foot traffic into the CS office as well as hits on the CS website. Placement of these flyers includes various departmental bulletin boards, in the Aztec Center, and generally blankets the campus.
3. **SDSU Universe**: This is an electronic newsletter that is distributed to faculty and staff. In it, CS offers announcements of relevant upcoming events.

4. **A-Frames**: The “A-frame” that stands outside the CS office is a convenient way to place flyers and post promotions for upcoming CS events. Because there is a lot of foot traffic through the Student Services East building, many students are potentially going to see and learn about useful workshops and CS offerings.

5. **Career Services TV Channel**: Dorms and cafeterias transmit CS promotions regarding upcoming events.

**Career Services Website**

The CS website is intended to detail the services that are offered to their various clients and their availability throughout the semester. Printed media items always direct traffic to the CS website as an option for getting follow-up information. The website consists of a homepage that offers links to webpages describing the various service offerings. One link sends traffic to the Aztec Career Connection webpage. Here, students must register with the Career Services in order to gain access to all the various workshops and services that the CS offers.

In summary, SDSU Career Services engages in year-round promotions that are intended to generate interest in all CS offerings and are geared towards enrolled SDSU students. At first glance, it is unclear whether the current promotional mix is reaching all potential clients. This study should shed more light on optimizing the CS promotional mix.

**Career Services Industry**

SDSU Career Services operates in a highly competitive environment and must continually assess its efficiency against current industry practices as well as competitors offering career finding and placement services. The Career Services industry includes other university career services offices that perform roughly equivalent duties. Examination of other career services departments at other universities can help establish a common set of best practices and offer benchmarking opportunities from which to launch an assessment of CS’ promotional mix.
1. **Current Industry Practices**: UCSD Career Services engages in the same mission as SDSU Career Services and uses a very similar promotional mix. Yet UCSD leverages its registrar’s database of student e-mail addresses for use in sending promotional materials to current students and alumni.

2. **Competition**: While job placement and career counseling services are conveniently located within the CS offices on campus, students are by no means restricted to going to the SDSU CS center for those needs. Indeed, students face a variety of options to fill their job and career related requirements.

**Job Placement Competitors**

SDSU Career Services competitors exist both on and off campus.

1. **Off-campus placement competitors**: Internet websites such as jobs.com or Yahoo!Jobs provide similar service offerings that are available to registrants with CS. Temp Agencies in the surrounding community can also help SDSU students work on resumes and find jobs.

2. **On-campus placement competitors**: Departmental efforts to place their graduating students are competing with the CS office. In the International Business Department for example, Claudia Allen is helping place grads into jobs. In the Department of Economics, Renate Adler facilitates internship placements.

**Career Counseling Indirect (and erroneous) Competitors**

On campus, CS has no *direct* competitors. Career counseling is a professional process and includes much more than supplying industry contact information. Indeed, CS is the only place on campus to find qualified and experienced career counselors. Yet we know that graduating students will often approach the academic advising center and/or faculty within their major for help with job placement, erroneously considering this act as career counseling.

**Problem Definition**

For quite some time CS has been facing the question why less than half of the SDSU student population uses its services. During the academic year of 2001-2002, CS had only one third of SDSU
students registered through Aztec Career Connection (Division of Student Affairs, 2003). It must be noted that even current registered students can not be considered as equal to regular users. Although some might have attended CS workshops or checked in at CS front desk without online registration, there are still a number of students who are registered but do not use CS on a regular basis.

Management Problem
How can SDSU Career Services increase the number of users and reinforce its usage among current SDSU students through a more effective promotional mix?

Marketing Problem
How effective are CS’s current promotional mix elements and what promotional mix changes could lead to an increase in the number of users and the usage of CS?

Research Objectives
1. To determine the awareness level of Career Services among SDSU students.
2. To identify Career Services’ usage behavior among SDSU students.
3. To evaluate the success of Career Services current promotional mix.
4. To identify promotional mix barriers that keep current SDSU students from making full use of Career Services.
5. To determine ways of improving Career Services’ current promotional mix.

Research Methodology

This research project was approached predominantly with primary data collection that included six individual interviews, two focus groups, and a paper-and-pencil survey. Extensive secondary research was performed and proved valuable in forming a more complete picture of CS, especially its promotional mix and advertising.

Data Collection Methods

Secondary data collection: Career Services’ 2001-2002 Annual Report was made available to our research team and provided insight into CS’s background. Another major resource used for secondary
data was the official CS website (http://career.sdsu.edu). In addition to these internal sources, published materials and media coverage of CS and other Career Service centers were reviewed.

**Primary data collection:** Both qualitative and quantitative primary data were collected for this study. Individual interviews and focus groups were utilized to gain an understanding of CS’s promotional mix and advertising methods. Individual interviews were conducted with three CS ambassadors who provided insights into CS’ effectiveness in advertising and promotions with respect to their personal selling (i.e. face-to-face) communication channels. In addition, we conducted individual interviews with two SDSU professors and one student to identify their thoughts on our research topic.

Two separate focus groups were organized and held in CS’s conference room with students drawn randomly on campus with a movie ticket incentive. The first focus group was comprised of students comparatively more familiar with CS and the second focus group was made up of students much less familiar with CS. The goal of focus groups was to gather qualitative data on student’s impressions of CS’s promotional mix, some of the problems or barriers, and possible future improvements.

Valuable information from different perspectives was used to shape questions for the subsequent survey questionnaire. After having the questionnaire pre-tested among eight SDSU students and revised according to their feedback, 500 hard copies were made to be distributed in 21 classes on campus over a three-week time period (March 24 to April 11). Specific instructions were provided on the cover page together with a statement of confidentiality and anonymity.

**Sample Selection Method**

**Target Population & Sampling Frame**

The target population of this research is undergraduate and graduated students who are currently enrolled at SDSU. According to SDSU Census Enrollment Summary (Spring, 2002), there are approximately 31,642 students enrolled at SDSU. About 40% of the student population is male and 60% female. In terms of class level, there are 14.5% freshmen, 11.5% sophomores, 23.0% juniors, 32.2% seniors, and 18.8% graduate students. In terms of major, there are 21.8% in the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts, 18.4% in the College of Business; 15.3% in Science, 14.8% in Arts and Letters,
and 6.8% in Health Services, 5.6% in Engineering, 2.7% in Education, and 16.7% undeclared. The sampling frame for the survey was students that happened to be present the day the survey was distributed in their class.

**Sampling Method**

Since we could not access the entire student body through an email or mail database, a non-probability sampling strategy – quota sampling method was used to make the study representative of current SDSU student population in terms of gender, class level, and major.

**Selection of Sampling Units**

Each individual student was considered as a sampling unit in this study. Professors were contacted and asked to participate in our study by allowing the first ten minutes of class to be spent having their students complete our survey.

**Sample Size**

Since we planned to distribute 500 surveys, 300 was considered a reasonable sample size with a relatively high returning rate for in class distribution. 447 questionnaires were distributed and 437 were returned, representing 97.8% return rate. After evaluating the completeness of these returned surveys, our final sample size became 321.

**Measurement Instrument**

The survey used for this research (see Appendix C) had 20 questions. There were 13 fixed-alternative questions, one open-ended question, and six demographic questions. The survey utilized a mix of measurements including 10 nominal level, three ordinal level, five interval level, and one ratio level scales.

**Validity and Reliability**

The validity of the survey questionnaire was established prior to its distribution. Its review by Dr. Natalie Wood, an expert in the research process, was deemed sufficient to establish a measure of proper validity. Since this is a one-time pilot study on CS’s promotional mix and advertising, the reliability issue has to be tested in follow-up studies.
Data Preparation

After we received the surveys, each returned questionnaire was checked and adjusted for completeness, consistency, and proper answers. Consequently, 295 questionnaires were considered perfectly completed and 17 were found not usable because large sections (question 14 through 20) were not filled out. For the remaining 125 questionnaires, we found that students did not follow directions properly and answered one or two of questions 2, 3, 12, and 13 incorrectly. On questions 2 and 3, 19 and 14 students marked more than one option respectively, even though both questions explicitly state to check only one option. Questions 12 and 13 are ranking questions. Although both questions explicitly state to use each number once and only once, 84 and 79 students ranked questions 12 and 13 incorrectly respectively. In addition, there were 20 questionnaires with other minor mistakes such as missing responses and 6 questionnaires with inconsistent responses or dubious patterns.

In order to make the respondents in our sample more representative of the student population in terms of gender, class level, and major, we added 26 deficient questionnaires with minor mistakes to the 295 perfectly completed surveys for final data analysis. Therefore, our final sample size was 321. These 321 questionnaires were coded and entered into an SPSS spreadsheet. The number 9 (99 for question 12 and 15) was assigned as system missing value. Five questions (questions 2, 3, 7, 9, and 18) had an “other” option that allowed respondents to specify a non-listed alternative. In addition, we entered 239 responses to the open-ended question (question no. 14) and 50 responses to the “other” option in a separate Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

Analytical Method

The SPSS data file for final statistical analysis was checked twice. All obvious data entry errors had been corrected before running the analytical procedures. A large portion of the analysis was descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, medians, modes, and standard deviations in order to identify central tendencies of the variables and dispersion of the responses. Additionally,
we used cross-tabulations to explore differences among various demographic groups, make comparisons, and detect associations between two variables.

The second portion of our data analysis covered inferential statistics. We used the Chi-square, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, Spearman’s rho and Kendall’s tau, and Pearson Correlation Coefficient to test the degree of association or difference between two variables. In all inferential analyses, we used hypothesis testing. Alpha was set up as .05, which means all our statistical interpretations were provided with a 95% confidence level. Statistically significant and meaningful results were identified (alpha \leq .05 and less than 20% data in our sample have expected count less than 5). A few other interesting findings were included in this final report in order to show notable statistics of particular groups or differences among several groups.

Research Findings

Qualitative Demographic Information

Our qualitative findings are retrieved from two focus groups, individual interviews with three ambassadors, two professors, and one student from SDSU.

Focus group one consisted of five participants, who were SDSU students between the age of 21 and 25. These participants were familiar with the CS services. Three of them were males, and two were females. The participants varied by major (business and communication), employment (full-time, part-time), and by course load (full-time, part-time). Four participants were seniors; one was a graduate student. The second focus group was comprised of six participants, who were SDSU students between the age of 18 and 21. These participants were less familiar with CS services. Three of them were males, and the three were females. The participants varied by major (computer science, business, English, and nursing), employment (full-time, part-time), and by course load (full-time, part-time).

Among the three CS ambassadors, there were two females and one male. The two females had been working with CS for two years, while the male interviewee worked with CS for less than a year. The CS ambassadors have several responsibilities and tasks. They are involved with various promotional activities for CS, such as creating and distributing flyers, posting signs on campus, organizing and
running career fairs, and presentations at Business Clubs and the Freshman Orientation. They perform these promotional activities approximately 15-20 times per semester.

The two interviewed professors had been with San Diego State University for over ten years and had been in contact with CS on a regular basis. They are involved in the following promotional activities: in-class presentations, referrals of students to Career Services, and speeches at SDSU career fairs. The interviewed student was a freshman, 20 years old, a full-time student, and a fine arts major. He spent limited time on campus (only Tuesdays and Thursdays) and was not employed.

Quantitative Demographic Information

In our quantitative research section, among the 321 survey participants whose responses were coded and used for statistical analysis in this study, 60.1% were female students and 39.9% were male students, which perfectly matched the distribution of student population in terms of gender. The study also reached a wide range of age groups from 18 to 63. In order to facilitate the data analysis procedure, the respondents in our sample were broken down to four categories: (1) from 18 to 19 years old, (2) 20-22 years old, (3) 23-29 years old, and (4) 30-63 years old. Both undergraduate and graduate students were included in this study (see Table 1).

Table 1: Demographics of Survey Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Letters</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non employed</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>48.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-29</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-63</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Status</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective 1: Awareness Level of Career Services among SDSU Students

The goal of this section is to explore to what extend SDSU students are aware of SDSU CS. Therefore, questions such as “have you heard of SDSU Career Services” and “where did you first hear of SDSU Career Services” were included in the qualitative and quantitative research.

Awareness of Career Services Existence

From our research, we can conclude that the awareness level of CS was fairly high. Yet there was indication that the awareness level could be higher and was perceived to be not high enough. Many freshmen and sophomores did not even know about the existence of CS. Among the participants of the second focus group, only three students were aware of CS and its service offerings. Among the participants that were aware of CS, only a few knew about the workshop or career fair schedules. It seems that students needed to be informed about events sooner.

Our survey results showed that among the 321 respondents in the sample, 85.4% had heard of CS. Our analysis provided statistically significant evidence that most of the respondents who had heard of CS were females, students below 30 years old, and full-time students.

Among the part-time employed respondents, 93.6% had heard of CS and among unemployed respondents, 79.9% of them also heard of it. Furthermore, among full-time employed respondents, only 64.0% stated that they had heard of CS. This seems to suggest that full-time employed students are less likely to be aware of CS.

Information Sources

Generally, participants in the qualitative research first heard of CS through a variety of sources including on-campus flyers, professors, in-class presentations, club presentations, freshman orientations, word of mouth, and Daily Aztec newspaper ads. Furthermore, our quantitative research showed that university programs (e.g. freshmen orientation, future Aztecs day) peers at school, and professors are the three primary sources where respondents first heard about CS. This result was consistent with the findings from the qualitative research. Additionally, the quantitative research provided information about rankings among categories, as seen below. Most respondents first heard about CS through university programs (see Figure 1).
Image of Career Services

Close to half (48.5%) of the students in the survey claimed that job and internship listings first came to their mind when they thought of CS. This finding was also supported by qualitative research. Career counseling took the second place with 23.2% although only half of the respondents (49.1%) were aware of this unique service offered by CS (see Figure 2). This indicates that students are most aware of job and internship listings among all CS services.

Generally speaking, most SDSU students are aware of the existence of CS and their services offered. However, there is still an opportunity to reach out to more students, especially to freshmen and sophomores.
Objective 2: CS Usage Behavior among SDSU Students

Our second research objective was to identify SDSU Career Services’ usage behavior among SDSU students. Based on the information from focus groups, the usage level of CS service offerings is fairly low.

Registration as an Indicator

Registration with CS can be considered an indicator of CS usage. Based on our quantitative research, only 31.3% of the respondents in our sample were registered, which is consistent with our secondary research. Among these registrants, the largest portion in terms of class level was seniors (39.5%) and graduates (20.9%), whereas freshmen and sophomores had the lowest registration rates with CS (see Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Registered Students within Class Levels](image)

Within each college, business students had the highest registration rate with CS. Students in other majors showed an incredibly low registration rate (see Table 2). Consequently, to turn non-registered students into registered students, CS should possibly focus on freshmen and sophomores as well as non-business students.

Table 2: Registered Students by Major

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% within respondent's major</th>
<th>respondent's major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>undeclared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>registered?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Usage of Specific Services

According to the qualitative research, SDSU students are more likely to use services such as career fairs, the Aztec Career connection, job/internship ads, and employment interviews than Career Counseling. Participants mentioned various reasons for not using CS more often. Some students stated that they did not see the need to think about their career at an early stage in their education (first two years). Others were not motivated to go to CS because they sought job-related advice through their department. When asked “how many times in the past 12 months have you used the following services”, the most used services were job & internship listings and Aztec Career Connection, while the most unused services found were employment interviews, workshops, and career counseling as determined by quantitative research (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Usage of Services within the last 12 Months (Mean Values)

Future Usage Intent

With respect to future intent of seeking assistance about career information, students are likely to use job search websites and the services of CS. Moreover, it is unlikely that they use the Career Services department of other universities. Our analysis revealed with statistical significance that male students are more likely to seek assistance at the SDSU CS website and SDSU department advising. Our analysis also showed that the more students are familiar with Aztec Career Connection, Career Counseling, and Career Fairs, the more likely are they to use SDSU CS and its website. Finally, our analysis also revealed with statistical significance that
seniors are more unlikely to seek assistance from SDSU department advising than all other class levels.

Figure 5: Type of Future Career Assistance (Mean Values)

![Type of Future Career Assistance (Mean Values)](image)

In summary, the usage level of SDSU students is fairly low, in particular among freshmen and sophomores. Students are more likely to use job & internship listings and Aztec Career Connection, they are less like to use workshop and employment interviews. Reasons for not using CS’s services more frequently are a combination of perceived deficiencies in the service offerings mix and promotional mix. However, students seemed to be somewhat inclined to use SDSU CS for career assistance in the future.

**Objective 3: Evaluation on Success of CS’s Current Promotional Mix**

Our third objective was to evaluate the success of CS’ current promotional mix. Feedback from focus groups and 1-on-1 interviews indicates limited success CS’ current promotional mix. Participants’ comments regarding the success of the promotional mix revealed deficiencies in the use of advertising channels, the promotional content, the placement of promotions, the timeliness and frequency of promotions, the friendliness of CS reception staff.

**Advertising Channels**

According to our focus groups, respondents generally agreed on which promotions were easiest to recall. The A-frame outside the CS office, balloons, and flyers were by far the most
often mentioned pieces of promotional material. In addition, our quantitative research showed that respondents most often received CS information through Daily Aztec ads, word of mouth, and on-campus flyers. However, respondents showed a strong preference for receiving CS information through email, mailings, and the SDSU website as shown in figure 7. Flyers, and in-class and in-club presentations should be added to this list based on focus group findings.

Combining the results from both qualitative and quantitative research, we can see that CS can optimize its promotional mix by increasing its use of email, and the previously mentioned channels.

**Promotional Content**

Promotional content was occasionally criticized as being either inaccurate (i.e. outdated) or not informative enough. A focus group respondent who regularly used the services of CS said he received information regarding a workshop and wanted to attend, but when he showed up at the appointed start time, the time and place of the workshop had been changed.

A few misperceptions regarding the CS service offerings and target market were discovered through our qualitative research. Freshmen and sophomores generally knew about CS but agreed that they would wait until closer to graduation before going. They did not feel that CS promotions clearly outlined how CS could help them as freshmen and sophomores. Respondents also felt that CS is “only for business students”. Moreover, participants in focus groups overwhelmingly responded in the negative when asked if they were aware of “career counseling”
as a professional service offered by CS that would benefit them now as well as later on in their academic careers. Only 49.1% of the survey respondents claimed that they were aware of career counseling.

Further analysis of the surveys supports these qualitative findings. As shown below, all CS services except for the CS resource room were perceived to be promoted somewhat inadequately (see Figure 5). Furthermore, most students were only somewhat familiar with the services offered by CS (see Figure 6).

Figure 7: In-/adequate promoted CS services (Mean Values)

Figure 8: Promotional Media Preference (Mean Values)

Focus group feedback also revealed that CS promotional materials such as flyers and Daily Aztec ads were “not appealing” or “eye-catching”.

- 23 -
**Placement of Promotions**

Respondents in our qualitative research were quick to agree that the “A”-frame outside the CS office was well placed to get their attention and gave it high marks for effectiveness. Yet the vast majority of respondents stated that too few emails reached them with information about upcoming CS events.

Figure 9: Placement Preferences for Flyers (Ranked Mean Values)

Analysis showed that all information sources used by CS were hardly recognized at all. It was also shown with statistical significance that freshmen are receiving more information about ongoing CS activities through in-club presentations than all other class levels.

**Timeliness and Frequency of Promotions**

Timeliness of on-campus promotions such as the “A”-frame and balloons advertising a career fair was criticized within the qualitative research groups. Qualitative research respondents perceived an inadequate amount of time between the promotions they saw and when the actual event took place. They frequently mentioned their regret at hearing about a potentially useful event to them on the day of the event and subsequently being unable to attend. Office hours were perceived to be limited and kept them from going to CS. Our statistical analysis also revealed that the more information students receive through the A-frame, Career Services’ website, and email, the more often they utilize the services offered at SDSU Career Services.

**Reception Staff**

Some focus group respondents felt that the CS front desk staff could be more supportive. On occasion, CS patrons felt that they were treated poorly.

**Objective 4: Barriers to Making Full Use of CS**

Our fourth objective was to identify barriers that keep SDSU students from using CS serving. The promotional mix barriers that focus group respondents felt were keeping students
from making full use of CS were closely tied to advertising channels, placement of promotions, bureaucracy at CS, as well as a pervasive misperception regarding “who CS is for”.

**Advertising Channels**

Many focus group respondents stated that their preferred method of receiving information is email. This would seem to imply a barrier given that they prefer to get CS promotional emails but are not currently receiving them. In fact, the analysis of the surveys showed that email is by far the most preferred information source for ongoing CS activities (see Figure 6). Although the university has collected email addresses from the entire student body, it is unclear if CS will have access to it in the near future.

**Placement of Promotions**

Many respondents felt there was a lack of adequate placement of CS promotional materials throughout campus. Classrooms, department buildings, and the Aztec Center came up as popular places to see these promotions.

**Bureaucracy at CS**

Qualitative research respondents often felt that bureaucratic measures in place at CS made it prohibitive for them to use the services. They cited their inability to simply walk in and have a sit down meeting with a CS counselor.

The timeliness of many of CS promotions was criticized, as previously mentioned. This conceivably stems from the bureaucratic measures in place at CS that slow turn around time for new promotions.

**Misperceptions surrounding CS**

As previously mentioned, there was a rampant misperception in the focus groups that CS “is only for graduating students” and that there is little of interest in the CS office to freshmen and sophomores. As an example, one respondent stated that in their opinion, CS “only offered job placement”. In fact, the analysis of the surveys showed that students tend to wait closer to graduation before using CS. Moreover, the analysis revealed that seniors and graduates are more likely to be registered with CS than freshmen and sophomores, which also supports this
hypothesis. As previously mentioned, respondents argued that given their understanding of what CS offers, they would likely wait till closer to graduating before going and felt that CS was “just for business students”. Many students have incorrect perceptions of what CS can offer them as freshmen and sophomores and to those students not close to graduation.

The quantitative analysis of the surveys supports the qualitative research findings on some points yet refutes them on others. Analysis showed that students in general do not receive enough information and don’t have enough time to use the CS services. In contrast to the general focus group opinion, survey respondents in general do not think that CS is only for business students. Moreover, the survey showed that students disagree with the statement that the services offered by CS are not useful.

Figure 10: Dis-/Agreement to Statements (Mean Values)

In summary, there are barriers that keep SDSU students from making full use of CS. Addressing these hurdles is crucial in order to increase usage levels.

**Objective 5: Improving Career Services Promotional Mix**

Our fifth objective was to determine ways of improving CS current promotional mix. The suggested improvements to the CS promotional mix include use of advertising channels, the promotional content, the placement of promotions, the timeliness and frequency of promotions,
the friendliness of CS reception staff. The findings below stem from the open-ended question 14 of our survey and our qualitative research.

**Advertising Channels**

Nearly all respondents chose email as the most preferable advertising channel. They felt that this was the best and most convenient way for them to become aware of upcoming CS events and services (see Figure 6). Interestingly, students of different majors and colleges showed different preferences for the way they want to receive information. For example, graduate students prefer to find flyers in departmental buildings, while freshmen seek flyers in classrooms. Engineering students prefer to find flyers in the Aztec Center while professional studies and fine arts students seek flyers in departmental buildings. These findings are helpful in order to target specific groups of the student population (see appendix page for detailed information about the differences).

**Promotional Content**

Informative content is very likely the key promotional mix element that this qualitative research was able to identify as a major opportunity for improvement. Many students have misconceptions about CS services and its target market. Career Services is not reserved for juniors and seniors and those close to graduation, it offers much more than job and internship listings. Yet based on their misperceptions, many respondents cited exactly those reasons for not going to CS and using their services. Consequently, it was suggested from many focus group participants to make promotional materials more informational.

Focus group respondents criticized promotional content and design of advertisements. It was suggested to improve the layout and look of the Daily Aztec ads and various flyers to make them more informative and eye-catching.

In addition, survey respondents routinely mentioned the need for website improvement. CS website seems to be too wordy, difficult to navigate, and disorganized.
Placement of Promotion

Our analysis of the survey showed further that students prefer to find them in classrooms or at the Aztec Center. Moreover, our analysis showed with statistical significance that full-time students tend to prefer finding flyers at departmental buildings compared to part-time students. Our analysis also showed that freshmen prefer finding flyers at departmental buildings compared to all other class levels. Moreover, these analyses showed that they do not prefer to find flyers at dorms compared to all other class levels. Overall, the preferences for flyer placement varied among different class levels and schools. This finding could also assist CS in planning their media mix in terms of location their offline advertisement (see appendix page for detailed information about the differences).

Focus group students mentioned that flyers are not sufficiently placed on the West side of the SDSU campus. Participants recommended increasing the number of flyers at these locations.

Timeliness and Frequency of Promotion

Timeliness of promotions, especially with respect to upcoming career fairs was most often cited as an opportunity for improvement. One week seemed to be the general consensus as to how much lead-time was useful before an upcoming event like a career fair. Respondents also felt that they should be notified in the event of CS canceling or changing times for events like workshops, or the like.

Career Services Reception Staff

Some focus group respondents felt that the CS front desk staff could be more supportive and helpful. We suggest training the existing reception staff with problem solving techniques and customer service.

Conclusions
**Awareness Level**

The awareness level of CS among SDSU students seems to be fairly high with 85.4% respondents indicating their knowledge of CS. However, only half of SDSU students seem to be aware of CS career counseling services. Students are most likely to first become aware of CS through university programs such as the Freshmen Orientation or the Future Aztec Day.

**Usage Level**

Although SDSU students seem to be somewhat inclined to use SDSU career services for future career assistance (second highest mean value after job search websites), the current usage level of CS among SDSU students appears to be fairly low. Only 31.3 percent of the respondents were registered with Aztec Career Connection according to our survey. Registration rates were found to be lower among freshmen and sophomores. Both qualitative and quantitative research reveals deficiencies in the service offering mix and promotional mix as reasons for the low usage level. The quantitative research indicated that job/ internship listings and the Aztec Career Connection are the most often used services, while workshops and employment interviews are least often used.

**Barriers**

Deficiencies (or barriers) in the promotional mix seem to exist in the use of advertising channels, the promotional content, the placement of promotion, the timeliness and frequency of promotions, and the friendliness of CS reception staff. According to our research, CS services are perceived to be promoted somewhat inadequate. Most students seem to be only somewhat familiar with CS services.

**Advertising Channels**

In terms of advertising channels, the respondents showed a strong preference for receiving information primarily through email, followed by in class presentations, club presentations, and flyers. On the contrary, the quantitative research reveals that students are currently most likely to receive CS information through Daily Aztec ads, word-of mouth, flyers, and the A-frame.
Promotional Content

With respect to the promotional content, past promotions seem to have induced a few misperceptions about CS service offerings and target market. The quantitative research uncovered that a certain number of SDSU students might believe that CS services are primarily for graduating students and business students. Some SDSU students also believe that CS services only include job listings. Consequently, participants of our qualitative and quantitative research suggested improving the informational content of CS promotions to not only address graduating students but also freshmen and sophomores as well. In addition, participants from the focus groups suggested improving the overall design of ads and flyers to make them more appealing.

Promotional Placement

Regarding the placement of promotions, respondents showed a strong preference for classrooms, the Aztec Center, and department buildings. In contrast most flyers are currently found close to CS on the East side of the campus. Many respondents suggested expanding the placement of promotions to the West side of the campus.

Timeliness and Frequency of Promotions

In terms of timeliness and frequency of promotions, the qualitative research showed that SDSU students would like to receive CS promotions earlier (one week before an event) and more frequently. A reduction in bureaucracy could increase efficiency and facilitate this process.

Reception Staff

Another barrier that focus group participants identified is the lack of friendliness among CS reception staff. Improvements were suggested.

Website

Finally, survey respondents expressed the need for website improvement. CS website was viewed to be too wordy, difficult to navigate, and disorganized.

Recommendations
Recommendations can be categorized into two main themes: (1) the need to “re-educate” SDSU students and eliminate the pervasive misperceptions that exist about what CS can do for them and when they should go, and (2) the need to restructure the current promotional mix to reflect the findings of this research in terms of the popularity and demand for email and other promotional channels.

**Misperceptions about Career Services**

1. Focus promotions around clearly stating what Career Services does and what benefits exist for each class level.
   a. Target freshmen and sophomores with emails and effectively placed flyers that explain why going to CS makes sense early on in their academic career. (i.e. Career Counseling and long-term goal-setting).
   b. Target juniors and seniors with emails and effectively placed flyers that explain why going to CS makes sense for them. (i.e. continue to use career counseling and also think about workshops and using job listings).
   c. In-class and in-club presentations can be geared towards educating students on CS and career counseling.

2. Focus simple, eye-catching promotions that outline the many services that CS offers and where more information can be found.
   a. Ads in the Daily Aztec can support recommendation 1, explaining why going to CS makes sense for all academic levels.
   b. Improve overall look and navigability of the website.

**Restructuring the Current Promotional Mix**

The clear and frequently stated preference for email communications suggests a restructuring of the promotional mix that CS currently uses.

3. Place email as the number one channel for CS promotions and information dissemination.
   a. Send periodic “reminders” via email that outline why going to CS makes sense for freshmen, sophomores, and all class levels.
b. Time emails to provide one week’s notice for upcoming career fairs. Include recommendations on professional attire and bringing a resume.

c. Use email to drive more traffic to the CS website to get information on dates and times of upcoming workshops, career fairs, and other CS events.

d. Notify students of changes to start dates/ times of CS events by sending out emails.

4. Increase frequency of promotions to increase overall awareness about ongoing CS activities.

a. Have more email and mailings that continuously inform students.

b. Improve the CS website’s layout and content, possibly with the assistance of another team of SDSU MBA students.

5. Improve friendliness of CS receptionist staff

6. Reduce bureaucracy within CS to improve timeliness of processes.

**Timeline**

The research team completed the project on time without deviations from the final presentation and final report date. The table below shows that the individual tasks were completed in a timely manner with minor deviation from the planned schedule. It should be noted that the individual interviews and the questionnaire distribution and collection took longer than expected. Although this led to minor delays of the succeeding tasks, the submission of the data analysis plan, final report and final presentation were not impacted and completed on time (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Timeline of the Research Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Tasks</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposal submission to the client</td>
<td>2/22</td>
<td>2/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group 1</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>3/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual interviews will be conducted this week</td>
<td>3/3-3/7</td>
<td>3/3-3/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group 2</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>3/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire submission to the client</td>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>3/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire distribution and collection</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>3/24-4/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Plan submission to Prof. Wood</td>
<td>3/25</td>
<td>3/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation &amp; Final Report</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>5/6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Limitations

The lack of access to an email database that contains students registered with CS as well as not registered with CS, lead us to use quota sampling. As a result, a less-than-perfect representative sample may have occurred through the use of a non-probability sampling method. In fact, the major and class level distributions of our sample do not exactly match the distributions of the population. In our sample, business and engineering students are over-represented while education majors are underrepresented. In addition, freshmen are over-represented while seniors are underrepresented. Classes were selected based on convenience and heavily relied on personal contacts. This might have led to a pool of survey respondents that was more easily accessible than random. These errors may have caused a less perfectly representative sample and could have affected the validity of our qualitative research findings.

The inability of some respondents to complete the survey correctly (mistakes were predominantly found on questions 2, 3, 12, and 13) reduced the sample size from 437 (returned surveys) to 321 (usable surveys). Answers that show certain suspicious patterns, deliberate falsification, and unconscious misrepresentation may have also contributed to the reduction of the sample size. These errors may have appeared because of time pressures from professors during the execution of the survey. The lower sample size in combination with administrative errors such as data-process and interviewer errors may have occurred and slightly distorted the quantitative research findings.

Budget constraints limited the number of focus group participants, which could have influenced the breath of our qualitative research findings. The delay of incentives for the focus group respondents might have reduced the number of focus group participants. The time to recruit focus group participants on campus was very limited.
The time constraints of this project prevented the ability to conduct test-retest validation and caused primary and secondary research to be of limited detail. In addition, the lack of market research expertise of our team may have affected the quality of the research findings.
References


Thank you very much for your participation. The purpose of this interview is to gain a better understanding of your impressions of the CS promotional mix and through this dialogue discover strategies to increase the number of users and reinforce usage. Your feedback will not be assessed on an individual basis and we guarantee the confidentiality of the information you will give. Neither your name, nor any connection to your comments today will be revealed.

We are going to have what’s called a standardized, open-ended approach interview. That’s basically a loose dialog we have based on a set of questions that are used for all our 1-on-1 interviews. In order to help me with recording all that’s said today I’ll be taping our interview. This interview should take us about 20-25 minutes. Should you wish to get in touch with either of us regarding your participation and the research results, we can give you our contact information once we are done with this interview. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

1. How long have you been working with CS?

2. What promotional activities do you perform? Can you explain these in detail?

3. How many times did you participate in these activities last semester (or this semester if newer ambassador), roughly?

4. Are these typical numbers for all CS ambassadors?
5. How many students participate in each of your activities?

I’d like to switch gears here and ask you to think about and share with me your personal impressions of the effectiveness of Career Services’ promotional mix—that is, all the different media that CS uses to not only make SDSU students aware that it exists, but also to promote various services to students.

6. Can you name as many promotional mix elements that you can think of that CS uses to promote itself and upcoming events?

7. Which channel in your view attracts the most SDSU students? Why?

8. Given how long you have worked for CS, and the extent to which you are familiar with its promotional mix elements, do you have an opinion on the effectiveness of CS promotions?

9. In the course of your ambassador job duties, have you gotten any impression from students on the effectiveness of CS promotions?

10. Can you think of any barriers that might keep SDSU students from making full use of CS?

11. Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how CS can improve their promotional mix?

That’s all the questions that I have and I want to thank you again for your valuable participation. I also want to remind you that your comments will be kept completely confidential and cannot be traced back to you. Feel free to take down my contact information if you are interested in learning more about our research and how your participation helps.
Appendix B: Focus Group Script 1

Welcome→Introductions→Purpose→What is a FG?→Questions→Closing

Welcome and thank you very much for your participation. I am _____ and this is my colleague _______. Please write your names on the nametags we provided. We are MBA students here at SDSU and we are doing research on Career Services and the promotional mix it uses.

The purpose of this focus group is to gain a better understanding of your impressions of the CS promotional mix and through this dialogue discover strategies to increase the number of users and reinforce usage. Your feedback will not be assessed on an individual basis and we guarantee the confidentiality of the information you will give. Neither your name, nor any connection to your comments today will be revealed.

Let me start us off by explaining what a focus group is. It’s basically a way for us to reach out to users and potential users for feedback and comments. Goals for our focus group today are to

♦ Gather opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about the CS promotional mix -that is, all the different media that CS uses to promote its services to SDSU students. For example, ads in the Daily Aztec and visits by CS ambassadors to classrooms are all parts of the promotional mix.

♦ Test our own assumptions about how effective their promotional mix is.

♦ Provide an opportunity to learn more about the promotions that CS uses.

My colleague is here to help me take notes and won’t be asking you any questions. We are tape-recording this discussion to help us with note taking. This focus group should take us about 50 minutes to an hour. Should you wish to get in touch with either of us regarding your participation and the research results, we can give you our
contact information once we are done with this interview. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

I want to mention again that this focus group is intended to concentrate on the **Promotions** that CS uses and we should steer well clear of discussions concerning the **Services** that CS offers. So please keep that in mind. Before we start, let us go around and introduce ourselves by giving your name, major, and class level. I can start, my name is *(your name here)*, I’m getting my MBA, and I am a graduate student.

Questions:

(1) I would like for everyone to try and think back to the first time you heard about Career Services and tell me, how did you first hear about CS?

Now, I would like for everyone to consider the past 6 months and to think about the promotions that you’ve seen or received from Career Services and the different media that were used in sending you that message.

(2) What promotional mix elements did CS use to advertise their services or upcoming events?

(3) What do you like or dislike about the promotions that CS uses to advertise their services?

I brought a flyer from Career Services. Please look at it for a couple minutes and let me know what you think about it.

(4) What do you like or dislike about this flyer?

(5) Would this flyer lead you to go to Career Services and seek their services?
I want to try a thought experiment with you for this next part. Please imagine that you have all been gathered as a team whose task is to build a promotional mix for Career Services from scratch.

(6) What would you put in it to make it more appealing to SDSU students?

Now that we’ve brainstormed a little on that let me show you a detailed representation of all the promotional mix elements that CS is currently using and we can see if there was significant overlap between your suggestions and what they are actually doing.

(7) What other media do you think could be effective in reaching you?

Please consider now your personal choices for getting ongoing information or “updates” on CS.

(8) Where do you go or look to for ongoing information or “updates” for new events at CS?

(9) What barriers might have prevented you from using CS regularly?

That’s all the questions that I have and I want to thank you again for your valuable participation. I also want to remind you that your comments will be kept completely confidential and cannot be traced back to you. Should you wish to provide further input regarding our study, feel free to take our contact information to get in touch with us. The data that we have collected will be used in formulating a questionnaire that will be focused around the effectiveness of CS promotional mix. About 4-5 hundred surveys will be passed out on campus starting in 2 weeks and the findings summarized in a final report by the end of the semester. Do you have any final questions for us?
Welcome and thank you very much for your participation. I am (your name here) and this is my colleague (their name here). Please write your names on the nametags we provided. We are MBA students here at SDSU and we are doing research on Career Services and the promotional mix it uses.

The purpose of this focus group is to gain a better understanding of your impressions of the CS promotional mix. If you are not aware of Career Services we’d like to discover some of the reasons why. Or if in fact you don’t go very often we’d also like to know how the current promotional mix fits in with or has an impact on your decision. Your feedback will not be assessed on an individual basis and we guarantee the confidentiality of the information you will give. Neither your name, nor any connection to your comments today will be revealed.

Let me start us off by explaining what a focus group is. It’s basically a way for us to reach out to users and potential users for feedback and comments. Goals for our focus group today are to

♦ Gather opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about the CS promotional mix -that is, all the different media that CS uses to promote its services to SDSU students. For example, ads in the Daily Aztec and visits by CS ambassadors to classrooms are all parts of the promotional mix.

♦ Test our own assumptions about how effective their promotional mix is.

♦ Provide an opportunity to learn more about the promotions that CS uses.

My colleague is here to help me take notes and won’t be asking you any questions. We are tape-recording this discussion to help us with note taking. This focus group should take us about 50 minutes to an hour. Should you wish to get in touch with either of us regarding your participation and the research results, we can give you our contact information once we are done with this interview. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?
Before we start, let us go around and introduce ourselves by giving your name, major, and class level. I can start, my name is (your name here), I’m getting my MBA, and I am a graduate student.

Questions:

1. How many of you know what Career Services is and have a rough idea of what services they offer?

2. How many times this semester have you been to Career Services and for what reason? Given your answer, can you maybe estimate how many visits that might translate into per year?

3. For those of you who have heard about Career Services, how did you first hear about it?

4. Do you know when workshops are being held, when employers come to campus and when there is a career fair?

5. What sorts of things tell you about such activities? Balloons? Flyers?

6. What do you like or dislike about the promotions that Career Services uses to advertise their services?
7. What are some reasons related to the promotional mix or services why you are not using Career Services on a regular basis?

8. What could Career Services do with respect to their promotional mix or service offerings that would make it more attractive to you?

That’s all the questions that I have and I want to thank you again for your valuable participation. I also want to remind you that your comments will be kept completely confidential and cannot be traced back to you. Should you wish to provide further input regarding our study, feel free to take our contact information to get in touch with us. The data that we have collected will be used in formulating a questionnaire that will be focused around the effectiveness of CS promotional mix. About 4-5 hundred surveys will be passed out on campus starting in 2 weeks and the findings summarized in a final report by the end of the semester. Do you have any final questions for us?
Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

SDSU Career Services

~ Promotional Mix & Advertising ~

We are graduate students in the College of Business and we are conducting a marketing research study for SDSU Career Services as part of our MKTG 766 class project. Your participation will be greatly appreciated and all your responses to these questions are completely anonymous. If you have any questions, please feel free to raise your hand. Thank you!

The purpose of this survey is to gain a better understanding of your impressions of SDSU Career Services and its promotional mix. If you are not aware of Career Services, we would like to discover some of the reasons why. Or, if in fact you do not go very often we would also like to know how the current promotional mix fits in with or has an impact on your decision.
**Questionnaire**

1. Have you heard of SDSU Career Services? Please check the one that applies to you.
   - ☐ Yes  ☐ No

   **IF you marked NO, please go to Question 11;**
   **IF you marked YES, please continue:**

2. How did you *first* hear about SDSU Career Services? **Please check only one.**
   - ☐ Career Fairs  ☐ On-Campus Flyers
   - ☐ Career Services’ TV Channel  ☐ Professors (e.g. departmental advising)
   - ☐ Daily Aztec Newspaper Ads  ☐ Peers at School (e.g. mentor, friend, classmate)
   - ☐ Internet (e.g. SDSU website)  ☐ University Programs (e.g. Freshmen Orientation)
   - ☐ Other (specify): __________

3. When you think of SDSU Career Services, what *first* comes to your mind? **Please check only one.**
   - ☐ Aztec Career Connection  ☐ Employment Interviews
   - ☐ Career Counseling  ☐ Job & Internship Listings
   - ☐ Career Fairs  ☐ Workshops
   - ☐ Career Services Resource Room  ☐ Other (specify): _________________

4. Are you registered with Aztec Career Connection (career.sdsu.edu)?
   - ☐ Yes  ☐ No

5. One unique service SDSU Career Services offers is *Career Counseling*, which includes individual appointments available for professional career planning, major selection, referral to self-assessment instruments, job search assistance, and resume reviews.

   Are you aware of this unique service?
   - ☐ Yes  ☐ No
6. How familiar are you with the following services offered at SDSU Career Services? Please circle the appropriate number for each service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very unfamiliar</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Very familiar</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<td>Aztec Career Connection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Fairs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services Resource Room</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Interviews</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job &amp; Internship Listings</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Excluding Career Fair visits, how many times in the past 12 months have you used the following services? Please circle the appropriate number for each service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>0 or more</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aztec Career Connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services Resource Room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job &amp; Internship Listings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify): _____________________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. How adequately does SDSU Career Services promote its services? Please rate the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very inadequate</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Very adequate</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aztec Career Connection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Counseling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services Resource Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Interviews</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job &amp; Internship Listings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. In the past semester, how many times did you get information about ongoing activities at SDSU Career Services? Please circle the appropriate number for each activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1 ~ 2</th>
<th>3 ~ 4</th>
<th>5 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A” frame (Sign in front of SDSU Career Services)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services’ Table (Career Fair and Orientation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services’ TV Channel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Services’ Website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Aztec Newspaper Ads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Student Orientations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus Flyers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of Mouth (e.g. friends)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify): _______________</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. The following statements describe possible reasons why you might not use SDSU Career Services more frequently. How much do you agree / disagree with these statements? Please rate according to this scale.

```
“I don’t have enough time.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I am planning to wait until closer to graduation before going.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“SDSU Career Services is only for business students.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I go to my department for career information.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Services offered by SDSU Career Services are not useful to me.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I don’t receive enough information about SDSU Career Services.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The promotional information I receive from SDSU Career Services does not apply to me.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“SDSU Career Services’ advertisements are not appealing to me.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
11. If you are seeking assistance about your future career, how likely would you use any of the following? Please rate the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Services at other Universities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Websites (hotjobs.com, monster.com, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU Career Services’ Website (monstertrak.com)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU Career Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU Business Internship Bureau</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU Department Advising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSU Professors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. If you were interested in getting information from SDSU Career Services, how would you prefer to receive the information? Please rank the following from 1 to 9. Be sure to use each number once and only once (1 = highest preference, 9 = lowest preference).

Your Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Ranking</th>
<th>Information Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“A” Frame (the sign in front of SDSU Career Services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Career Services’ TV Channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Club Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Daily Aztec Newspaper Ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In-Class Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>On-Campus Flyers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>SDSU Career Services’ Website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. Where on campus would you like to find flyers about SDSU Career Services? Please rank the following from 1 to 7. Be sure to use each number once and only once (1= highest preference, 7 = lowest preference)

Your Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Ranking</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aztec Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Aztec Recreation Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cafeterias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Departmental Buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dorms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Student Clubs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. What can SDSU Career Services do to more effectively reach you?

____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

15. What is your age? __________

16. What is your gender?
   - Female  - Male

17. What class level are you currently enrolled in?
   - Freshman  - Sophomore  - Junior  - Senior  - Graduate

18. What college do you belong to?
   - Undeclared
   - College of Arts and Letters
   - College of Business
   - College of Education
   - College of Engineering
   - College of Health and Human Services
   - College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts
   - College of Science
   - Other (specify): __________________________

19. Are you attending SDSU part-time or full-time?
   - Part-time (<12 units for undergraduates; <9 units for graduates)
   - Full-time (12+ units for undergraduates; 9+ units for graduates)

20. Are you currently employed?
   - No  - Part-time employed  - Full-time employed

   Thanks you for participating in our study! Have a nice day!
SDSU Career Services: Promotional Mix

May 6, 2003

Jan Heiligtag
Joel Renick
Anja Schwepppe
Hua Wang
Fast Facts -

• CS is a department of the Division of Student Affairs at SDSU

• Operating since the 1950s

• Offers a wide variety of services to SDSU students, alumni, recruiters and employers, graduates of other universities, parents, and faculty

• According to 2001-2002 Career Services Annual Report:
  - 418,058 contacts utilizing its services
  - 4,829 career counseling appointments
  - 11,503 attended workshops

• CS mission is to, “contribute to the academic and personal success, encourage independent civic responsibility, and promote the welfare of all students”
Usage of Career Services

- SDSU enrollment 31,642 yet only 10,563 students registered

Exposure to Career Services: Current Promotional Mix

1. Personal Selling
   - In-class presentations by CS ambassadors
   - Gradfest and Senior Send-off

2. Direct E-Mail and Mailings
   - Emails sent to registrants
   - Mailings sent to encourage non-registrants to register with CS

3. PR/Publicity
   - Future Aztec’s Day
   - Career Fairs
   - New Student Orientation
4. Media Advertising
   - Print ads in the *Daily Aztec*
   - Flyers
   - *SDSU Universe*
   - A-Frame

5. Career Services Website
   - Offers access to registration, dates & times of upcoming events
   - Job listings, promotional content
Management Problem:

How can SDSU Career Services increase the number of users and reinforce its usage among current SDSU students through a more effective promotional mix?

Marketing Problem:

How effective are Career Services’ current promotional mix elements and what promotional mix changes could lead to an increase in the number of users and the usage of CS?
Research Objectives:

1. Determine awareness level
2. Identify usage behavior
3. Evaluate success of current promotional mix
4. Identify promotional mix-related barriers keeping students from using CS more
5. Determine ways of improving current promotional mix
Secondary Data

SDSU Student Population

- Total: 31,642
- Gender: Female 60%, Male 40%
- School

  - Professional Studies and Fine Arts: 22%
  - Business: 15%
  - Science: 15%
  - Arts and Letters: 15%
  - Health Services, Engineering, and Education: 15%
  - Undeclared: 15%

- Class Level

  - Freshman: 19%
  - Sophomore: 19%
  - Junior: 32%
  - Senior: 15%
  - Graduate: 11%

Sources: CS Annual Report 2001-2002, CS Website, SDSU Census Enrollment Summary
Qualitative Research

Overview

• Focus groups
  - 5 participants familiar with CS
    (3m/2f, 21-25)
  - 6 participants unfamiliar with CS
    (3m/3f, 18-21)

• Individual Interviews
  - 2 Professors
  - 3 Ambassadors
  - 1 Student
Major Findings

- Awareness level of CS: medium to high (exception: freshman and sophomore)
- Students are poorly informed about CS
- Information about CS activities comes too late
- Various information sources used (about CS)
- Usage level of CS services: low-medium
- Promotional mix: low-medium level of success
- Preferred info source: email & in-class presentations
Qualitative Research

Statements

“CS is only for business students.”

“I am waiting closer until graduation before I use CS.”

“CS only offers job & internship listings.”

“I go to my department to seek assistance about career information.”

“I don’t receive enough information about CS.”

“CS ads are not appealing to me.”
Quantitative Research

• Paper-and-Pencil Survey Questionnaire

• Nonprobability Sampling – Quota Sampling
  – In terms of gender, class level, and major

• In-Class Distribution (March 24 to April 11)
  – 500 photocopies
  – 447 distributed
  – 437 returned (97.8% returning rate)
  – 295 perfectly completed
  – 17 not usable
  – 125 ok

• Sample Size
  – 295 (perfect) + 26 (ok) = 321 (final sample size)
Demographics of the Sample

**Gender:** Female 60.1%; Male 39.9%

**Class Level:** (I could not insert the table)
- Freshman 33.3%
- Sophomore 12.5%
- Junior 16.8%
- Senior 20.9%
- Graduate 16.5%

**Major** (I could not insert the table)
Quantitative Research

- **Statistical Analyses (SPSS)**

- **Descriptive Analyses**
  - Percentages
  - Means
  - Medians
  - Modes
  - Standard Deviations

- **Inferential Analyses**
  - Chi-square
  - Independent Sample t-test
  - One-Way ANOVA
  - Spearman’s rho and Kendall’s tau
  - Pearson Correlation Coefficient
Information Sources

“Where did you first heard of SDSU Career Services?”

- Career Fairs: 34.1%
- On-campus Flyers: 9.8%
- CS TV Channel: 9.4%
- Professors: 6.7%
- Daily Aztec Newspaper Ads: 14.5%
- Peers at School: 3.5%
- Internet: 21.2%

Image of Career Services

“What first comes to you mind when you think of SDSU Career Services?”

- Aztec Career Connection: 23.2%
- Employment Interviews: 3.3%
- Career Counseling: 8.1%
- Job & Internship Listings: 48.5%
- Career Fairs: 7.0%
- Workshops: 8.8%
- CS resource room: 1.1%
Usage of Specific Services

[Bar chart showing usage of specific services: Job & Internship Listings, Aztec Career Connection, CS Resource Room, Career Counseling, Workshops, Employment Interviews]
Quantitative Research Findings

- **Promotional Content**

  **Placement of Promotions**

  **Placement Preferences for Flyers (Ranked Mean Values)**

  ![Bar Chart]

  1. Classrooms
  2. Aztec Center
  3. Departmental Buildings
  4. Aztec Recreation Center
  5. Cafeterias
  6. Dorms
  7. Student Clubs
• **Promotional Content**

*Timeliness and Frequency of Promotions*

A-frame, Career Services’ website, and email, the more often they utilize the services offered at SDSU Career Services
Quantitative Research Findings

Dis/Agreement to Statements (Mean Values)

- Not enough information
- Not enough time
- Ads are not appealing
- Use my department
- Wrong information
- Unuseful services
- Only for business students

Strongly agree
Neutral
Strongly disagree
1. Less Perfectly Representative Sample
   • Quota sampling method (non-probabilistic)
   • Validity of findings

2. Incorrectly Completed Surveys
   • Ranking questions, suspicious patterns, deliberate falsification, unconscious misrepresentation
   • Reduction of sample size (447 ⇒ 321)

3. Budget Constraints
   • Number of focus group participants

4. Time Constraints
   • Preparation for focus groups
   • Test-retest validation
   • Final report

5. Limited Market Research Rxpertise
1. **High Awareness Level**
   - 85% awareness of CS
   - 49% awareness of CS’s career counseling
   - Students first become aware of CS through university programs

2. **Low Usage Level**
   - Inclined to use SDSU CS for future assistance
   - 31.3% registration level (lower for freshmen and sophomores)

3. **Deficiencies in:**
   - Service Offering Mix
   - Promotional Mix

4. **Usage of Specific Services**
   - Job/ internship listings are most often used
   - Workshops and employment interviews are least often used
Promotional Mix:

- Somewhat inadequate promotion
- Limited familiarity with CS services

1. Advertising Channels
   - Preference for email, in-class and club presentations, and flyers
   - Currently: Daily Aztec ads, word-of-mouth, flyers, A-frame

2. Promotional Content
   - Misperceptions (graduating students, business students, job placement)
   - Need for improving the informational content
   - Need for redesigning ads and flyers
Promotional Mix, cont.: 

3. Placement of Promotion
   • Preference for classrooms, Aztec Center, and department buildings
   • Currently: Close to Career Services (East side of campus)

4. Timeliness of Promotion
   • Promotions are received too late
   • Bureaucracy within CS
   • 1 week in advance

5. Frequency of Promotion
   • Too few promotions
   • Increase frequency

6. Reception Staff
1. Use email, in-class and club presentations, and flyers as dominant advertising channels

2. Eliminate misconceptions by reeducating SDSU students about CS

3. Adjust informational content

4. Create appealing and eye-catching ads and flyers

5. Place flyers in classrooms, Aztec Center, and department buildings
6. Engage in promotional activities one week before the event

7. Reduce bureaucracy within Career Services to shorten turn around time of new promotions

8. Increase promotion frequency

9. Improve friendliness among reception staff
Questions?