

# We The Future: Marketing Plan

Targeting High School Students Greg Volynsky

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### **Executive Summary**

We The Future offers students awards for the best of works submitted to a certain category of works, mostly related to Constitutional study. This plan described here is a 4-part, 6-step plan to grow awareness about We The Future, specifically targeting high school students. This plan, as any marketing plan must, assumes a few basic premises: first, that the goals of We The Future are to educate students about the Constitution and make college more affordable; second, that the success of a marketing strategy for a scholarship program is measured by the number of applications. In assuming these premises are true, a marketing plan must aim to increase awareness of We The Future within both students and others, as teachers and parents, who will encourage students to participate in the scholarship competition.

## The Target Market: Ideal Applicant & Champion

We The Future provides scholarships to various groups of students- however, this Marketing Plan will focus on high school students. The first step of the development of any marketing strategy is to decide who is to be marketed to. To effectively convey who the perfect applicant, rather than speaking in broad terms, lets focus on one particular person.

Meet Robert Miller. Robert is a fictional character of my imagination, and he represents We The Future's ideal applicant, or the so-called customer persona. Robert is an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student in high school in the suburbs of New York City. He serves as President of his class and has vivid interests all around- especially literature and business. For him, applying to We The Future is one of the easiest decision he's ever made, and he enjoys the application process tremendously. From that process, he develops a keen interest in public policy and constitutional study.

Any effective marketing strategy must also first acknowledge the presence champions – the people who are We The Future's best advocates. It is important for the marketing strategy to reach these champions to get them to do the grunt work of convincing potential applicants to apply. Champions include teachers, parents, schools, and former recipients of the scholarship. These groups of people will be key to the growth of We The Future.

## The Marketing Strategy: Summary of Steps

Steps:

- 1. Reach out to former recipients
- 2. At any time, pay for higher listing in Scholarship Directories, Buy Ads, and more of the usual
- 3. Utilize submitted work for attention
- 4. Reach out for local news coverage
- 5. Partner with schools

6. Develop a Class Curriculum

#### The Marketing Strategy Part 1: Utilizing Resources

Any business, whether for profit or non-profit, must optimize use of its existing resources in order to thrive in a world of competition. We The Future is no exception.

#### Yesterday's Winner, Tomorrow's Champion

Perhaps the most underused resource of scholarship organizations is the former recipients of that scholarship. These are students who are very grateful to We The Future, and can provide the opportunity to spread the message to prospective applicants for free.

In order to optimize reachable students, it is crucial to keep a mailing list of all students who have won a scholarship with We The Future. Then, it is possible to ask the former recipients to post on social media and spread the word.

It is also possible to retain information of the school administrators of recipients of the award, and to send them a congratulatory email on having a winner of a scholarship as a student. In that email, you can ask that the winner be announced over the school during announcements, and subtly, in that way, also spread the word about We The Future.

#### The Work: A Great Advocate

Yet another under-used resource is the work that applicants produce. The work provides perhaps the most significant opportunity for free media, a key to reaching potential applicants. As the media is based on ratings, they usually give attention to events that many people would enjoy reading about.

One step We The Future should take is to contact local newspapers of the winners of scholarships. Each letter can be identical for purposes of efficiency. Many local newspapers would seize on the opportunity to write about a young successful local students. While We The Future would not reach prospective applicants with newspapers, parents and teachers- some of the most ardent champions- would be reached. These champions will later try and convince prospective applicants of becoming just applicants.

Another possible step is to try to make some of the work provided by applicants go viral (spread quickly). The category of a song about the constitution has probably the most potential of going viral. We The Future should make a YouTube channel of the songs originally sung by students. Teachers very often play songs about topics the students are learning in a classroom setting to make the learning experience a more exciting one. The Constitution is a very prominent learning topic, and when teachers would search 'Constitution Song' on YouTube, they would see the channel of We The Future.

## The Marketing Strategy Part 2: The Usual

In addition to some of the less common steps that are more specific to We The Future described in this plan, some more usual steps can and should be taken as well.

#### **Scholarship Directories**

Many scholarship directories exist- Scholly, Unigo, Fastweb, etc.- and almost all of them allow for certain scholarships to be listed higher than others for money. That's one easy (though expensive) way to be on student's radar.

#### Search Engine Optimization & Ads

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) allows for We The Future to be viewed by people searching for scholarships ahead of other scholarships.

Ads are another easy yet expensive way to get on radar- Facebook ads are today some of the easiest ways to reach high school students. Acquiring an ad portfolio would surely promote We The Future.

## The Marketing Strategy Part 3: Acquiring Partnerships

Partnerships are a very simple way to spread the word about scholarships. Partnering with a scholarship provider is often very beneficial and will not take much convincing. A partner will also provide tremendous value to the We The Future scholarship, as a good partner will come with an existing base of reachable students which We The Future can tap in order to gain more applicants.

#### Schools

Schools are everywhere and are not difficult to find, with existing databases with volumes of names, addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of schools and their administrators. Yet schools also provide hundreds- if not thousands- of reachable prospective applicants.

Hence, We The Future should reach out to schools to form partnerships. Ask the schools to inform teachers of the existence of this scholarship, who might then inform their students. If it can be afforded, offer the schools a certain amount of money if a certain number of applications are received from that school. Schools of students who win the scholarship should be recognized by We The Future to incentivize schools to inform their students of the scholarship opportunity.

## The Marketing Strategy Part 4: Above and Beyond

In the Executive Summary, it was stated that this marketing plan is based on a few basic premises. One of these premises is that the goal of the We The Future contains two main parts: to

educate students about the Constitution and to make college more affordable for students. This next step allows for both of these goals to be fulfilled.

#### **Developing a Curriculum**

We The Future should develop a class curriculum to effectively teach Constitutional study to high school students. This curriculum can be made available and sent to teachers. A few different curriculums of Constitutional study would need to be made, including a separate two-week and month plan with a few varying levels of complexity, detail, and overall difficulty. This plan will be promoted as free curriculum material for schools on an important yet widely under-taught topic.

The class curriculum will incorporate work accepted by We The Future for scholarship applications. Teachers who use the free curriculum would be suggested to tell their students to apply to the We The Future scholarship- the students would have to, in accordance with the curriculum, perform one of the tasks that an application to We The Future requires either way, and sending it in for a chance to win money is just an added bonus.

The actual development of a school curriculum is no small task, and requires talking with professionals in the education field. Partnering with these professionals- whether teachers, psychologists, or other specialists- is key for We The Future to be able to develop an affordable yet well-thought out curriculum. The partnerships, which would, essentially, give We The Future free professional advice, can be achieved by contacting teachers already teaching courses which include Constitutional study (such as Civics) to attend a conference. As a non-profit, We The Future can simply ask teachers to help out.

This curriculum could prove to be a pivotal differentiation factor with other scholarships.

#### End Note

We The Future is an organization with a mission, and this marketing plan aims to help achieve that mission.

This plan was written with the key factor of differentiating resources to utilize a series of various marketing techniques and develop several new ones specific to We The Future. Some aspects of this plan will work better than others, and it is vital to track the effect of each part of this plan to decide which aspects are worth focusing on in the long-term. Furthermore, though this plan is written with a recommended order, the order can be changed depending on available capital and other factors unknown to the author.