



HOWERTON+WHITE

**Visioneering Wichita – College Mecca  
Marketing Plan**

**July 2011**

## **I. Summary**

College Mecca is a group of 21 South Central Kansas colleges, universities, technical schools, community colleges and other accredited/certified programs. The members of College Mecca represent 75,000 current students. The group is a Visioneering Wichita Alliance created to promote the need and value of higher education, and to help make navigating the system easier for traditional and non-traditional students.

For Visioneering Wichita's College Mecca Strategic Alliance, the focus is helping South Central Kansas become a highly respected center for post-secondary education locally, nationally and internationally.

The group's efforts will include:

- Creating an awareness of the region as a college mecca and learning community.
- Increasing the number of students in all area colleges and universities.
- Providing graduate level education with world-class faculty and research facilities.
- Providing classes and research that support employers' goals for high-paying jobs.
- Increasing research grants.
- Identifying future technologies that can provide what it takes for the Wichita economy to be successful.

### **The Talent Dividend Prize Competition**

The "Talent Dividend Prize Competition", a joint effort by CEOs for Cities, The Kresge Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education, is helping to fuel momentum for this effort.

The Talent Dividend Prize is a \$1 million prize to be awarded to the city that exhibits the greatest increase in the number of post secondary degrees granted per one thousand population over a four-year period and achieves its Talent Dividend. This \$1 million prize will be used to launch a national promotional campaign centered around talent development for the winning city.

Wichita, Kansas Metro Area is a registered "Competing City" in this competition.

*"CEOs for Cities has identified talent development as fundamental to successful cities. Our research indicates that 58 percent of a city's success, as measured by per capita income, can be attributed to the percentage of the adult population with a college degree."* — ceosforcities.org

## **II. Goals and Objectives**

### **Build a Cooperative System of Higher Education for South Central Kansas**

The 21 participating institutions recognize the need to work together to increase the number of students — and, more importantly, graduates and highly skilled employees — to promote the economic health and stability of our region and state.

## **Create a “Closed Loop” Educational Model**

Education leads to a job / career that leads to a positive economic impact. The participating institutions see the importance of communicating this path and helping to lead learners through this path.

- How to get into the right educational “system”
- How to get a job in the “system”
- How to strengthen the “system”
- How to retain talent in the “system”

## **Create Plan to Meet Immediate, Achievable Goals**

- Increase the number of degreed individuals in the Wichita Metro area.
- Increase our “talent dividend” or pool of skilled workers.
- Create ways to drive interest and enrollment at area colleges and institutions of higher learning.

## **III. Outlook**

### **A. Top 8 Trends of the Decade (2000-2009)**

- Online Learning
- High Tech Classrooms
- Early Admission Flip Flop
- Study Abroad Boom
- Changing Admissions Communications Tools
  - Email
  - Tweets
  - Texts
  - Live Chats
- Student Amenities
- Overcrowded Two-Year Colleges

- *CollegeSurfingInsider.com, “Top 8 Education Trends of the Decade” by Dawn Papandrea, January 2010*

### **B. Perceived Value of Higher Education**

A May 15, 2011 Pew Research report tracks the American public’s views of higher education. The following information has been pulled from [PewSocialTrends.org](http://PewSocialTrends.org), “Is College Worth It?” Pew Research /Chronicle of Higher Education, Report Issued May 15, 2011

#### **Cost / Value**

- A majority of Americans (57%) say the higher education system in the United States fails to provide students with good value for the money they and their families spend.
- An even larger majority—75%—says college is too expensive for most Americans to afford.

- At the same time, however, an overwhelming majority of college graduates—86%—say that college has been a good investment for them personally.

*“The education-based earnings gap among workers grew steadily from the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s and has been relatively stable since then, according to a Pew Research analysis of census data. However, because college graduates are more likely than high school graduates to be employed, the earnings gap somewhat understates the full marketplace premium that accrues to those with a college degree.”*

- The cost of a college education—at both public and private institutions—has roughly tripled since 1980 in inflation-adjusted dollars.

### Monetary Payoff

Adults who graduated from a four-year college believe that, on average, they are earning \$20,000 more a year as a result of having gotten that degree. Adults who did not attend college believe that, on average, they are earning \$20,000 a year less as a result. These matched estimates by the public are very close to the median gap in annual earnings between a high school and college graduate as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2010: \$19,550.

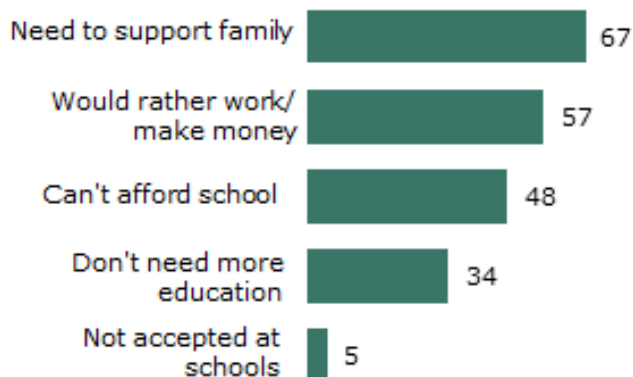
### Reasons Not to Go to College

- Among adults ages 18 to 34 who are not in school and do not have a bachelor’s degree, two-thirds say a major reason for not continuing their education is the need to support a family.
- Also, 57% say they would prefer to work and make money
- 48% say they can’t afford to go to college

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### Reasons for Not Going to College

*% saying this applies to them*



Note: Based on adults ages 18-34 who do not have a four-year college degree and are not currently enrolled in school, n=311.

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## **College Presidents**

- A majority of college presidents (58%) say public high school students arrive at college less well prepared than their counterparts of a decade ago
- Only 19% of the 1,055 college presidents surveyed say they believe that the U.S. system of higher education is the best in the world; just 7% say they think it will be the best in the world 10 years from now.

## **College Completion**

- In 2010, more than 60% of 25- to 29-year-olds had finished at least some college education (at a two-year or four-year institution), an increase from about 25% in the early 1960s.
- In 2010, 32% of 25- to 29-year-olds completed at least a bachelor's degree (up from 13% in 1962) and an additional 9% had an associate degree as their highest degree completed.
- More young women (36%) than men (28%) complete at least a bachelor's degree, and young whites (39%) continue to be more likely than young blacks (19%) or Hispanics (13%) to have at least a bachelor's degree.

## **C. Participating Educational Institutions – College Mecca**

Baker University  
Bethel College  
Butler Community College  
Central Christian College  
Cowley College  
Embry Riddle Aeronautical University  
Friends University  
Hesston College  
Hutchinson Community College  
ITT Technical Institute  
McPherson College  
National American University  
Newman University  
Pratt Community College  
Southwestern College  
Tabor College  
University of Kansas School of Medicine - Wichita  
University of Phoenix  
Vatterott College  
Webster University  
Wichita Area Technical College  
Wichita State University

## **D. Stakeholders**

- Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas
- South Central Kansas Business Community / Wichita Metro
- LEARN Alliance

## **E. Challenges & Opportunities for College Mecca Effort**

### **Opportunities**

The clearest, most encouraging opportunity for College Mecca is the fact that 21 institutions of higher learning are willing to cooperate. Many of the other communities participating in the Talent Dividend Competition are still working to bring key stakeholders together in any way. This alliance will make it possible to implement streamlined processes for the potential student.

South Central Kansas and the Wichita Metro area needs highly skilled workers. This fact helps motivate businesses to support higher education and certification programs.

### **Challenges**

The “under-employed” stretch across all socio-economic, ethnic, experience and age groups, making it impossible to reach all members of our target audience in a single way or with a single message.

“7% of EVERY community has ability to go back and finish degree.”

Funding. While the LEARN Alliance is rich in “good intentions” capital, funding is needed to build communications tools to help move learners from one level of education to the next.

## **IV. Marketing Strategies**

### **A. Target Audience Recommendations**

#### **1. Focus immediately on adults w/partial post-high school education.**

**GOAL: Help adults finish achieve next level of higher education and/or job training.**

High School Graduate w/some classes >>> Certification

High School Graduate and/or Certified Skill >>> Associates Degree

High School Graduate with or without Associates Degree >>> Bachelors Degree

#### **2. Build awareness among education institutions about needs of adult learners.**

**GOAL: Help programs recognize unique challenges and barriers faced by potential students and how to overcome these.**

- Credit confusion; reciprocal agreement differences
- Reasons for leaving school in first place (i.e. minor violations, fees)
- Lack of accessibility to advisors, professors; working around work hours
- Classes geared toward 18-year olds, not 35-year olds
- Funding and financial aid
- Acknowledgement and /or credit for life experience

### **3. Work with business community to make education of employees a priority.**

**GOAL: Help employers understand benefit of creating policies to further employee education will help their company and organization.**

- Promote the 1% Solution — Challenge businesses to set achievable goals for number of employees to complete next level of education or certification.
- Encourage review of tuition reimbursement policies to match goals and needs of learners/employees.
- Tie in groups such as Chambers of Commerce, including Hispanic Chambers of Commerce
- Offer coordinated paid internship programs
- Communicate clearly to students that the jobs are here.

## **B. Brand Development Recommendations**

### **1. Adopt and Embrace Foundational Identity through Archetype**

*Many strategic-minded advertising agencies have discovered the value of using archetypes as one way to create powerful brands. This trend was ignited by the book "The Hero and The Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes" by Carol Pearson and Margaret Mark.*

*The advertising agency Young and Rubicam conducted a six-year study of 50 brands and found that brands strongly aligned with single archetypes gained economic and market values at a rate almost double of brands that had no clear archetypal alignment.*

- "Understanding users through brand research: an interview with Mitch McCasland" at uie.com. Mitch McCasland of Brand Inquiry Partners is an expert in brand strategy and Account Planning and has worked with such clients as Proctor & Gamble, Dr. Pepper/Seven-Up, and Verizon/GTE.

#### **Your Archetype: The Champion**

*"Where there's a will, there's a way."*

Core desire: to prove one's worth through courageous acts

Goal: expert mastery in a way that improves the world

Greatest fear: weakness, vulnerability, being a "chicken"

Strategy: to be as strong and competent as possible

Weakness: arrogance, always needing another battle to fight

Talent: competence and courage

#### **Provides an identity for brands that:**

- are inventions or innovations that will have a major impact on the world
- help people be all they can be
- solve a major social problem or encourage others to do so
- have a clear opponent you want to beat

- are underdogs or challenger brands
- are strong and help people do tough jobs exceptionally well
- need to be differentiated from competitors that have problems following through or keeping their promises
- customers see themselves as good, upstanding citizens

## 2. Create Brand Name and Brand Promise

# ACHIEVE KANSAS

*The Future of Your Career Is Here*

We're recommending "Achieve Kansas" as the name of the effort / brand / product the alliance is offering.

Why this works:

- Achievement is closely associated with success, and is an inherent human desire.
- Achievement is a core part of a Champion personality.
- "Achieve" is an imperative, a call to action. Strong commanding words are much more effective and remembered by consumers.
- "Achieve" is a motivator; it serves to tell the audience that this organization is here to help make achievement possible.

We're recommending "The Future of Your Career Is Here" as the brand promise.

Why this works:

- It helps explain what the organization is about.
- It identifies that help for your career will be found at this "place."
- It hints that your career is also in Kansas (for retention purposes).
- It will have meaning for employers (for recruitment purposes).

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## V. Creative Strategies

### Develop Targeted Campaign to Adult Learners

#### • Fund, Create and Launch AchieveKansas.com – The Website is the Product.

H+W has purchased the domain name AchieveKansas.com. In many ways, the website is the product.

- It is the hub where all the information, resources and partnerships come together.
- It is the storefront where learners can explore, decipher and plan next steps.
- It is a resource for employers to showcase the jobs of today and the jobs of tomorrow.
- It is a resource for educators to show what classes, certifications, degrees and experience is needed to get there.

In creating the site, an egalitarian approach / equal “share of voice” is critical for the sponsoring/participating institutions. The website will be branded under “Achieve Kansas,” not just a handful of colleges.

The website will be one element ... one tool in the toolbox ... in which each school invests.

Elements of the Website Should Include:

- Video Testimonials
- Transfer Aggregate
- Alternative “Life” Credits
- Financial Aid Info (Breaking the Barriers)
- Work Support Info (How to get help at work)
- Current Jobs
- Future Jobs
- Skill Calculator (Questions that Direct you to a degree & University)
- My Interest (Asks what degree you are going after w/ University suggestion)
- eNews Signup
- Contact Database (who’s signed up, what are their interests, etc)
- Mobile Browsing Layout

Key Messages and Content should include ways in which Achieve Kansas is breaking down the barriers adult learners experience with:

- Rolling Admission Policies
- Not All Programs Require Entrance Exams
- Availability of Federal and State Financial Assistance
- Start Dates May Be Flexible
- Credit for Life / Work Experience
- Different Definitions of “Non-Traditional” Student

#### • **Develop and Launch Comprehensive Email / E-News Tools and Messages**

Email marketing is important, because it uses assets educators have already. Many colleges and universities have an existing list of alumni. This is the “low hanging fruit” that we want to reap first. We want participating schools to hone this list and take advantage of current contacts, while also building the brand and talking to other prospects.

- Each Institution can attach their own brand in places
- Institutions can use their own email lists
- Various parts can drive back to college or to website

Just as with all forms of advertising, it is vital to be strategic with email marketing. The target must opt in and then receive messages that address their specific interests.

## Email Opt-in Campaign

Create and launch an opt-in marketing campaign to alumni who did not finish degree. Offer bulleted list of benefits and a message of “change” and inspiration and ask them to opt in for future information about furthering their career. Includes email response to new opt-in users with inspirational messages such as, “You’ve taken a big step today in your next step to a great career.”

### **EXAMPLE - Telecom Provider [Welcome Message]**

Covad uses this welcome message as part of its on-boarding process for all new customers. The messages are triggered daily for all new customers, but are segmented according to six different product types to be relevant to each customer’s account. Besides thanking them for choosing Covad, the welcome message features links to a Start Center microsite, where customers can learn how to manage accounts online, access the online support center for FAQs, apply for rebates, purchase additional email accounts, and more.

This campaign reports an average 67.57% unique open rate and 13.77% unique CTR. The program has been quite successful in getting the customer started-off right in that the 30-day churn level has been reduced four percentage points.



## Postcard-Style Campaign

Create email “postcards” that include simple HTML images and messages. The point is to be as compact and swift to read as a postcard. Promote elements of the new Achieve Kansas website.

## E-Newsletter

And email newsletter should combine compelling content and easy-to-skim

design. Our e-newsletter for Achieve Kansas will help build our brand, educate the market and support recruitment ... both for colleges and businesses.

This Sample email from Microsoft — while selling a specific product — is a great example of a well-branded, benefit-driven way to drive traffic to your site.

### **EXAMPLE - Microsoft**

The Microsoft Enhanced Hotmail and Messenger Launch! campaign is an industry leading example of how to do email marketing right by offering very relevant content to a targeted audience with a very clear message and call to action.

To target their email announcement to likely mobile users, they conducted two levels of segmentation and personalization:

First, they segmented the database into mobile users, non-mobile users, and previous but not active mobile users. Then, they customized and cobranded messages according to the subscriber's mobile carrier, such as AT&T.

**Windows Live for Mobile**

Try the New  
Hotmail & Messenger  
for Mobile Web

- Optimized for YOUR web enabled phone
- Enhanced interface for easier messaging
- Store your password for quick login

[Try it now](#)

works for me

**Try the new, improved Hotmail on your phone**

- Improved for touch devices (Windows Mobile & iPhone)
- Faster page loading & easier navigation
- HTML support for viewing graphics and photos

[Try Hotmail on my Phone](#)

**On the go? Use Messenger to IM from your phone**

- Search your buddy list for contacts
- Have multiple conversations at one time
- Send emoticons like you do on the PC

[Try Messenger on my Phone](#)

OPTIMIZED FOR internet enabled Phone

The result:

- 26% of users that clicked through from the email completed the desired end action
- Cobranding provided a 12% lift in conversions vs. non-cobranding creative (as high as 43% lift in certain segments)
- Mobile users converted at rate 433% higher than non-mobile users, achieving goal of driving significant engagement among current users
- Lapsed mobile users converted at a 311% higher rate than non-mobile users, driving overall active user growth more efficiently than acquiring new custom

### **Email Event or "Sales" Alerts**

For those who have opted in, provide periodic notifications of events designed for them, or for new programs, changing standards, open houses, reduced tuition, financial aid dates, or a webinar event.

## **• Develop and Launch Traditional Media Campaign for Overall Awareness**

### **Billboards**

- Creative
- Media

### **Radio**

- Creative
- Media

### **Television**

- Creative
- Media

## **• Develop Online Ads / Online Behavioral Marketing & Online Management**

Online behavioral targeting and marketing is attractive to advertisers because it delivers ads to consumers based on their past search behavior. Since user behavior reveals their interests, prospects are highly motivated and likely to convert.

One of the reasons that advertisers are moving toward targeted advertising is the degree of audience fragmentation. With targeting, we can reach a large number of people within a common target group.

Search profiling will allow us to target search users with ads based on the type of search the potential customer has used in the past. We can also target users with paid search ads on landing pages after they leave a search site.

### **Banner Advertisement**

- Creative
- Media

### **Facebook Ads**

- Creative

- Media

## **Blog**

### **YouTube Channel**

- Testimonials from: Students, Employers, Successful Graduates

## **Facebook**

## **Twitter**

## **LinkedIn**

## **Social Monitoring & Engagement**

### **SEO**

- Creating Quality Links  
- Site Optimization

## **Develop Marketing Tools for Participating Learning Institutions**

### **• Create Co-Branded / Templated Tools**

#### **eNews**

#### **One Sheets**

#### **Brochures**

#### **Web Banners**

#### **Posters**

#### **Website Section**

- Manage your contacts - Database  
- View Statistics of site  
- Media Center w/ CoBranded Tools

## **Develop Marketing Campaign for Area Employers / Employees**

### **• Create and Launch a “1% Campaign”**

The 1% idea is based on the idea that converting 1% of adult learners (who have some college credit) into certified or degreed graduates is a realistic, achievable goal that would go a long way in creating momentum for the initiative.

Likewise, this portion of the campaign would challenge employers to set the goal of further educating/certifying 1% of their workforce. While this would require some effort to

configure schedules, policies and benefits in a way to allow these employees to achieve their educational goals, it seems possible for businesses to set and achieve such a goal.

### **Marketing Materials to Promote Program to Businesses:**

**Website** – Section Outlining Initiative

**Folder Packet** – Brochure & One Sheets about campaign

### **Marketing Materials to Promote Opportunities to Employees:**

**Posters** – for awareness within work environments

**Brochures** – for HR / recruitment / retention

**Video Loop** – for HR and Training / lobby

**Informational One Sheets** – for specific career path options (customizable)

### **Develop Marketing Push for Funding Campaign**

#### **• Create Achieve Kansas “Sales Support” directed to both businesses and schools.**

We recommend creating a small “kit” of materials to make the case for the existence and promotion of “Achieve Kansas.” These materials would be used to visit with area employers to ask for their participation and/or their monetary investment in the effort. In addition, the materials can be created in a way to address concerns and needs of participating schools and to encourage additional schools to participate.

**Five-minute video** – “Man on the street” interviews with adults talking about what jobs are needed for the future, how graduates feel their degrees have helped their career, and employers sharing the need for highly skilled workers.

**PowerPoint presentation/template** – A branded template to be used by members of alliance, by employers and schools to share with other interested parties about the need and – in the future – the progress of the campaign.

**Brochure about Achieve Kansas** – The brochure should provide a brief overview to describe what the organization is, what the goals are, and how individuals, businesses and adult learners can get involved.

**Basic Collateral (business cards, letterhead, envelopes)** – Providing branded business communications pieces for members of the alliance and for any communications coming from “Achieve Kansas.”

### **Develop Parallel Marketing Campaign for Talent Retention**

#### **• Create and Launch Campaign Elements focused on retaining talent in the area.**

The effort to move adult learners toward higher certification or degrees is only one part of what will be the success of “Achieve Kansas.” In order to “close the loop”, we must make

every effort to keep these employees in our region in order to grow and expand our economic base and provide a continually growing pool of workers for area businesses.

A coordinated, strategic set of actions should be developed to help adult learners and accomplished professionals not only achieve educational goals, but also navigate the work world, receiving the experience and information needed to stay and move through their chosen career paths.

**Internships** – Look at successful programs developed by other states in which many businesses agree to offer a set internship program; such a program could include a set hourly pay rate and requirements.

**Bus Passes and other community incentives** – Provide access to transportation and help to overcome barriers which may keep the under-employed from reaching classes, internships, interviews and jobs.

**Seminars / Job Fairs** – Support the many existing efforts by attending and promoting area seminars and job fairs, using such events to visit with employers, students, parents and the under employed about the tools available at Achieve Kansas.

**Social Media / Website Section** – Develop are of website that addresses available jobs and career opportunities in South Central Kansas.