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Reach Out in a New Direction: Applying Public Relations Best Practices to Academic Outreach

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Act with Purpose
PR should develop mutual understanding between organizations and their publics. Be clear and focused on the intention

- CREATE fresh, consistent communications that engaged our audiences;
- CONNECT librarian savvy and know-how with student/researcher success;
- DEVELOP literacy-level messaging that spoke concretely to users about how we can help them succeed academically

Know Your Audiences
Relationships are the keys to successful communication. Define who you want to reach, what their needs are and what actions you want them to take or benefits you want them to experience.

- 5,100 new and transfer students in orientations
- 3,000 Honors College and University College students
- 2,000 Library Fest attendees
- 1,000 Honors College and University College students
- 600 new faculty and graduate students
- 1,000s of international students
- 1,000s of researchers interested in data management
- 100 individual departments and groups

Hone Your Messages and Repeat
Advertising works because it’s repetitive. Consistent language and themes will gain notice. Don’t say everything you could. Say only the important things. And repeat them. And repeat them.

Our messages
VCU Libraries is a vital partner in your academic success. We will help you get it done faster, easier and better. We can help you make better grades. We can help you get organized. We will help you get stuff you need for free. We will teach you how to find the highest quality materials.

We are here to help you.

Build a Team, Create and Make
Language and design form the foundation of communication - the process and production of tone and typography, color and scale, emphasis and placement. Content strategy is the why - the concept and decisions that wrap around the entire product.

An effective campaign begins with the end in mind. Our goal: broad outreach.

- 10,000 plus 4-page Mini-Compass distributed in year one
- 5,000 Your Compass printed and 2,400 distributed
- 1,000 We Can Help You handbills circulated
- 8,000 Faculty Focus newsletters circulated
- Some evidence that the campaign has driven up web site and research guide traffic.

Elements of Campaign
- Four-page library Mini-Compass
- 36-page booklet Your Compass
- Faculty Focus newsletter with poster side for contacts
- 10 posters for display in the library
- E-communications banner
- Research guide key tags (31 different guides)
- Screens, bus ads, social media
- Handbills for targeted messages, events, and audiences
- Post It note giveaway

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