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Marketing team – supporting research communications

Leeds University Business School

2022/2023

Context

Research marketing and communications



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- We are currently working towards a more clearly defined marketing and communications strategy for business school research. The focus being on greater collaboration between teams and a greater focus on prioritising and being less reactive.
- We are currently trying to prioritise impact case studies(REF), research on sustainability, COVID-19 and new ways of working, international and industry collaborations, and highly topical or 'headline grabbing' research. For 2022 we want to identify a top 20 research impact projects and 3 or 4 priority research themes.
- A key challenge to this is that we have 4 faculty teams and 15 research centres who may be working on different priorities. Teams are very focused on delivering excellent quality activity and there is a lot of work happening across the school. But sometimes we don't always collaborate as much as we could and it is not uncommon for us to have multiple activity on different topics, but aimed at the same audiences.
- For 2022 and 2023 the marketing team's focus for research is on 'collaboration' and 'prioritisation'. In time we may want to develop a more audience-led strategy but first we need to identify some high-level themes and priority research cases where we can start to deliver some more integrated and collaborative campaigns.
- In 2021 we tested our first research 'campaign' which was a good way to start to identify some priorities and increased collaboration. It now serves as a useful starting point for further campaigns in 2022/23.

Strategy pillars

Research marketing and communications



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The marketing team have identified three main pillars and objectives for research marketing and communications activity. We have identified these to try and help breakdown what is a complex area of communication into three simple pillars of work where we need to focus:

1. To raise awareness of our research capabilities and strengths with external stakeholders, such as the research community, potential partners and policy makers



This is largely information that is broadcast widely across our channels. It is theme-led and has a very broad set of audiences.

It is high-level, more emotive and focused primarily on big global themes and challenges, as well more operational themes such as collaboration and community.

It is largely delivered through the website, social media and press coverage.

Key stakeholders are the pro-dean for research and the research office. We want to start to identify some priority themes.

2. To transfer knowledge and to increase consideration and use of our research outputs by stakeholders in order to generate direct impact



This is more targeted communications design to drive active engagement with an event, content, or report. It should be project-led, utilising the right channels and messages for the desired audience.

It should be more rational/factual and targeted at specific industries, press or individuals.

It is often delivered through individual academics, liP events, targeted/paid social media, policy briefings and research blogs. As well as through research centre activity.

Key stakeholders are the Research Impact team who will help identify priority projects

3. To support researchers with their direct communications and grant applications, in order to secure future funding



This is more practical and is about helping researchers with the information they require around communications to help build their networks and support their applications and awards.

This is currently well managed by the Research Office, providing a range of support services. They help researchers start thinking more about their intended audience and dissemination plans when applying for grants. When a project is awarded, PIs are offered a webpage, blog and podcast etc...

Priorities for marketing team

2022/2023



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Strategic

1. Develop more regular reporting on communications activities for senior research stakeholders to improve collaboration

1. To raise awareness of our research capabilities and strengths



1. Identify key themes for 2022 and test a more collaborative approach to 2 or 3 campaigns around these strengths ('new ways of working', 'value chains' and 'the North')
2. Announcement of REF outcomes in May 2022
3. Continue to share regular content across all social channels, striving for shared content with key stakeholders
4. Utilising newsworthy events or external triggers for content across the website and social media - I.e. International Women's Day, Sustainability Week
5. Development of a calendar of key campaigns and touch points for external communications
6. Integrate the new Business School strategy work across research touch points and develop. Including opportunity to review and develop new website content (flagship videos)

2. To transfer knowledge and create research impact



1. Identify Top 20 priority impact case studies to develop more integrated communications plans and campaigns utilising a range of media. Integrate alongside existing activity such as Ideas in practice and public affairs engagement
2. Work more with external PR agencies to develop wider international reach for research
3. For priority impact case studies, begin to test and trial new channels such as video, trade press and utilising paid social media to target key audiences
4. Work with an SEO agency to look at utilising key words to support blogs and other content
5. Integration of a single content-strategy for Business School content cutting across all channels (alumni newsletters, Network, research blogs etc...) with a focus on prioritising key impact case studies across all touch points