

## Can a Team of Dedicated Volunteers Launch an MBA Case Study Competition that Creates Real World Experience and Opportunities for MBA Students and Succeeds at Engaging Top Universities and Colleges in Oregon and Washington?

Can the Committee Accomplish Their Goals and Break Even on the Operating Budget for the Competition and Finals Gala?



### Communications Goal

Lead and maintain a centralized communications hub for volunteers, universities, students and sponsors with the design and execution of a live, professional website by August of 2016; support ongoing website updates to registration, event promotion, detailed instructions and biographies for participants, universities, judges, guest speakers and volunteers.

### Background

Committee Chair, Cordell Berge, worked with the ACG Portland Chapter to solidify Board support in the creation and execution of this first-ever ACG Cup competition in the Northwest.

Next, Cordell enlisted ACG Board member, Jan Quinn, and her company, Ideagility, who agreed to provide their services and to serve as the ACG Cup Northwest Communications team. Ideagility understood that a large and nearly yearlong time commitment was needed to support the community and committee members working so hard to launch this Oregon vs. Washington MBA competition.

### Participating Universities



We communicated closely with the committee to execute on their goals throughout July and August. Top shelf branding requirements were met with a custom website design featuring our original photomontage of Portland and Seattle. Team registration functionality, the ability to download a Student Handbook and promote university and sponsor participates were important features of the website. Finalized quickly, the website was available to support registration and communicate the mission of ACG Cup Northwest in late August of 2016:

“MISSION: To promote corporate strategic growth and expertise in our region through real world experiential learning that forges lasting relationships among our finance communities and regional graduate business programs.”

We continued to work closely with the Committee Chair and participants throughout the fall of 2016. Frequent website updates helped clarify competition rules and promote the many contributors from Oregon and Washington. Thanks to the hard work of the volunteer committee, eleven schools (including Oregon State University) and nine sponsors signed on with the competition.

Beginning in 2017, we created the Finals Gala invitational series in email to support driving demand and accept payment and registration for the final competition and dinner. We customized the registration landing pages to share excitement and promote our esteemed keynote, Don Robert, Non-Executive Chairman of Experian.

*Congrats to the winning team members from PSU, shown here receiving their cash prize from the ACG Cup Northwest Committee.*



## Outcomes

The rounds of competition were fierce and the student teams impressive. Judges, university coordinators and other volunteers worked tirelessly in support of the early rounds of competition held in Oregon and Washington. Four finalist schools ultimately competed and in the end, the Portland State University team won the Finals in March 2017.

## Success metrics include:

- ACG Cup Northwest exceeded goals to more than cover their operating budget; 53 guests purchased tickets by registering on our landing page for the Finals Gala.

- Post event, participant survey data was largely positive regarding ACG Cup Northwest and the communications we shared.
  - Regarding the website, over 86% of participants reported that the website was useful.
- Over 80% of survey respondents reported that the email communications were useful.
- Best of all, the entire ACG Cup Northwest Committee has agreed to volunteer again, hosting another competition in 2017-2018:
  - 100% of the sponsors have re-engaged, pledging support
  - Nearly all schools have pledged to again participate and many have made the case study competition a regular part of their curriculum. Several new schools have been added to the participation roster too.
- The Committee has asked Ideagility to expand their website and email communications efforts.
- The new Ideagility Communications Plan is board-approved and will expand to include social advertising for the Finals Gala in 2018.