Executive Summary - Think Purple Research Survey

The purpose of the research was to assess the effectiveness of the “Think Purple” marketing theme as it applies to WIU alumni. The research was conducted within MKTG 576 by Dr. John Drea, with comments analyzed by MBA students Katie Buss, Conner Herkelman, and Letisha Trepac. An e-mail with a survey link was sent to 29,723 alumni and “friends” of the university on October 22, 2013, and a total of 2,005 responses received by October 27 (6.7% response rate). 32.8% of respondents graduated since 2000, 37.3% graduated between 1980-99, and 29.7% graduated before 1980.

Key Findings:
1. 61.8% of respondents had heard of “Think Purple,” while 32.2% had not (6% were unsure).
2. Most common locations for seeing a "Think Purple" message: outdoor ads (73.5%), website (71.9%), and email (64.8%). Interestingly, 33% recognized Think Purple advertising from t-shirts.
3. 60.8% were had a positive/somewhat positive opinion of "Think Purple" as a WIU message, while 16.7% were negative/somewhat negative. (22.6% were neutral).
4. The Rocky Sweep logo was the logo/theme most closely associated to WIU by alums who graduated since 1990 (58-61%). The Bell Tower logo is most closely associated with WIU by alums who graduated between 1960-79 (53-65%)
5. Comments were collected regarding thoughts on Think Purple, what respondents think when they are asked to “Think Purple” and marketing suggestions.
   a. Thoughts on Think Purple: 47% of the comments were positive, 41% were negative.
   b. What respondents think when asked to “Think Purple”: 37% had positive thoughts about the university, 24% had negative thought, 14% indicated they thought about athletics, 13% recalled concepts unrelated to the university (other schools and marketing themes that include the color purple), and 9% though of the WIU school colors.
   c. Suggestions: 54% suggested changing the Think Purple campaign to focus more on signature programs, student/alumni/university achievements, the campus, and/or cost effectiveness; 30% suggested no changes, and 16% suggested changing media (more TV and print, fewer billboards)
6. Alumni who have donated to the WIU Foundation in the past 12 months are slightly more likely to have a positive opinion of Think Purple as a marketing theme (65% compared to 57.5%)

Fig. 1: What is Your Overall Opinion of "Think Purple" as a Marketing Theme for WIU? (n=1290)

Fig. 2: Which Logo/Theme is Most Closely Identified with WIU? (n = 1011)

Bell Tower      Rocky Sweep