Publications and Digital Media Excellence Awards

PROJECT NAME: Youth Apprentice Video Series

LINKS TO VIDEOS:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bGKiGbq5fg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtIzMJxGc4s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQYk3V1ledA

TARGET AUDIENCE(S): The target audience for our project was computer science High School students that are looking to get into work study programs as well as local businesses that are looking to build on existing intern programs.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The goal for the videos was to bring awareness about Youth Apprenticeship opportunities for students in our area as it relates to computer science careers. We wanted to provide a snapshot of the hands on learning opportunities beyond the classroom in a chosen career pathway. Additionally, we wanted to provide a testimonial on the success of a youth apprentice program from both the student and employer perspective for other businesses to model.

RESEARCH: The idea to bring awareness to Youth Apprenticeships through video was brought forth by the Computer Science Talent Ecosystem Youth (CSTEY) leadership group. The group is comprised of educators and community leaders. Research indicates we have more jobs than employees in the computer science field in northeast Wisconsin. Additionally, research finds that students are heading out of state for work in this career pathway. Thus, the group felt getting students involved in on-site work while in High School would help both the student find their niche and businesses to have more of a local talent pool to draw from. Since we were in the midst of COVID restrictions, we could not have group outings or site visits. Therefore, we took the approach of telling individual success
stories through video. We felt the best way to reach our target audiences was through videos highlighting their peers.

PLANNING: The execution of this video series was very difficult, because many employers did not take part in the program this past school year due to COVID. The same could be said for student involvement. For those businesses that did take part, their offices were closed for much of the year. We worked with school districts to identify students who were already involved in the type of youth apprentice programs we were looking to profile. We then identified students who were using different computer science skills in their youth apprenticeship. Next, we looked for youth apprenticeships in different business sectors. For example: insurance, manufacturing, internet technology, etc. At this point we began communicating with the identified participants and started scheduling the filming days.

IMPLEMENTATION: Even though we planned on filming the videos in the fall, we had to wait until the spring to get access to the sites, students, and business leaders/mentors. Once we did get clearance to have on-site access to the respective businesses, we devoted one filming day to each story. COVID social distancing guidelines were followed throughout the filming days for the comfort and safety of all participants. Post-production included editing, custom animation creation, custom graphics creation and ADA compliant captioning. The final videos were housed on the CSTEY website, which provides additional information on the youth apprenticeship program. Additionally, the videos were distributed via social media on defined dates before the end of the school year.

EVALUATION: The Youth Apprentice video series proved to be very successful on many fronts. The original plan was to showcase the videos on social media to create interest and drive traffic to the CSTEY website and that is exactly what happened. CSTEY website traffic rose about 400% on days the videos were showcased. Additionally, CSTEY member school districts displayed the videos on their social media channels, and counselors have used the videos to show students career exploration opportunities. Businesses were able to see the videos at Chamber of
Commerce meetings. The big reveal came at Lambeau Field when the Packers hosted the 2021 New North Summit. This is the biggest business event of the year in northeast Wisconsin that gathers business leaders from all walks of life. It was a tremendous opportunity to have the videos showcased in front of this audience.

All in all, student requests for YA opportunities are up for the 2021-2022 school year and we now have a record number of businesses participating in the Youth Apprentice program. Six additional businesses will add YA’s this school year. The beauty of the video series is the content and messaging will be used for years to come to recruit more students and businesses to the program.