

CENTRO COMMUNICATIONS

EPICODUS STRATEGY PLAN

BY NOELLE NERCESSIAN, TAYLOR DAVIS AND CAITLIN MONAHAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Situation Analysis	Pages 2-5
Key Audience	Page 6
Key Messages	Page 7
Objectives	Pages 8-9
Evaluations	Pages 10-11
Budget	Page 11
Timeline and people	Pages 12-13
Prototype, Brand Ambassador Program	Pages 14-16
Sources	Page 17

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Current State

Founded in 2012, Epicodus' primary mission is "to help people learn the skills they need to get great jobs". In the growing industry of website design, software development and coding, the school prides itself on being a "coding bootcamp" for career shifters and motivated tech-says. The new school located in Portland, Oregon offers internships and night classes to ensure success for its students. Epicodus has a strong emphasis on teamwork and is building an alumni program of over 300 graduates and growing.

As enrollment rates increase, Epicodus is now aiming to add more diversity to their student population, primarily among women, ethnic minorities, and students still in high school. Currently, there is a great opportunity for Epicodus to target high schoolers who are choosing a different path other than college after high school.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

Epicodus is not a traditional school. It offers hands on teaching to maximize collaborative learning and efficiency of time. For a high school student who has yet to excel in a traditional learning environment Epicodus can offer something new. With no lectures, homework, or in class presentations, Epicodus cultivates a culture that students can thrive in. While diminishing the distractions that some students find harmful to learning Epicodus' main focus is learning how to code: it's that simple. Teachers at Epicodus are all alumni, so they understand the material not only from a teaching perspective, but also what it means to study and learn the material. They also use the pairing method to code which helps students to collaborate with other students, catch each other's errors, and prepare themselves for the tech world. In addition to an accessible classroom environment, the opportunity for success after graduation is tremendous.

Weaknesses

A weakness the coding school faces is competition within the industry. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Entry-level coders earn less than programmers with university degrees who enter the job market". In this case, Epicodus grads will not only be competing with other coding camps in the Pacific Northwest, but also with students who received a college degree. Coding is always changing and without a more in-depth education it might be hard to adapt to an infinitely mobile industry. Epicodus will not be able to target private schools in the Portland-Metro area because most students who attend these types of schools are on a traditional college track. According to an interview with a college advisor in the career center of Jesuit High School, 98% of its students attend a four-year college upon graduation. This weakness limits the amount of students our campaign can reach in the Portland-Metro area.

Opportunities

Epicodus creates opportunities for students to get hands-on coding education in a fast-paced, inclusive environment. The extensive full-time and part-time classes allow students the flexibility to learn on their own time and save money while doing it. Imagine being able to graduate high school and after a 5-week course be able to compete in the tech industry with nearly 98 percent success rate of being hired, according to the *New York Times*. The immediate applicable skills a student can learn in coding camp are transferable to many aspects of the tech world and will be sure to offer greater opportunities.

Threats

There is an opportunity cost for taking such an extensive course. Some people might have to quit their job, relocate or ignore other commitments. Ultimately the biggest threat, however; is measuring the success and expectations of students. As it is a relatively new course, Epicodus risks lack of credibility in the industry to communicate to their prospective students.

ENVIRONMENT

Throughout the Portland area there are various schools and academies offering similar incentives and programs. Some of these institutions include:

Epicodus has:

Direct Competitors:

- Portland Code School
- The Tech Academy
- PDX Code Guild
- Code Fellows

Indirect Competitors:

Of course, there are many coding schools around the world that will create an indirect competition for Epicodus. Local universities or online programs, however; will have graduates competing in the same market. Programs include:

- Code Oregon
- University of Oregon
- Oregon State University
- Portland State University
- University of Portland

CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES

According to the *Bureau of Labor Statistics*, employment rates for software developers is expected to grow 22 percent from 2012-2022, making the industry extremely appealing to both professionals looking for a career change, or young students furthering their education.

According to the *New York Times*, there is a wide range of ages among students, but the average age for someone pursuing a career in software coding are people in their 20s and 30s. With growing interest in the industry, 2015's graduating classes of coding schools include over 16 thousand students with a projection of raising every year for the next 20 years. Likeminded companies, similar to Epicodus, are having no problem attracting students to attend their, on average, 8-12 week classes, the issue is the lack of diversity in the industry, primarily for women and ethnic minorities. White and Asian men make up the majority of software development jobs, according to *Delaware Online*, and African Americans and women are the least represented.

Across the globe, the issue of diversity is a steadily growing concern among the industry, especially with the influx of job opportunities. Millennial have an advantage in this industry as the most tech-savvy generation in the world. It will be most important for the coding boot camp to keep in mind their diverse student body from young adults just graduating high school to middle-aged, experienced professionals looking to change their career path.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PUBLICS

Epicodus' biggest opportunity is to be the first coding school to break into the high school market and target high school students interested in tech-related careers, thus making our firm's audiences:

Primary

- o Current high school students in the five chosen public high schools in Portland-metro area:
 - Beaverton High School, Wilson High School, Hillsboro High School, Reynolds High School and Tigard High School
- o Career centers and counselors in high schools

Secondary

- o Parents of high school students

The primary audience of this campaigns includes current public high school students in public high schools throughout the Portland-metro area. This is an important audience because it opens a new market for expansion that has not been previously explored.

- This campaign is focused primarily on public high schools due to the high number of students from private schools attending traditional four-year universities

Public high schools in the Portland-metro area are an active audience because those who are approaching graduation are considering their futures and potential career paths.

By targeting career centers, and faculty in the centers, Epicodus will:

- Create productive relationships with the faculty to advise students to follow a less traditional college path
- Steer them to Epicodus

Career advisors and centers fall into both an active and aware audience. Faculty at high school career centers are present to advise their students and give direction for education post high school.

The secondary audience for this campaign includes the parents of high school students in the Pacific Northwest in these high school. While not all, many parents of current high school students are active in their children's futures, especially further education.

KEY MESSAGES

To align with the primary objective of this campaign, the key messages focus primarily on raising awareness of Epicodus among current high school students in the Portland metro area, as well as increasing enrollment rates within the next coming school year.

Key Messages

- Public high school students in the Portland Metro area should think that a career in computer coding and programming is worth pursuing further education for
- Epicodus is the coding school in the area that offers the best incentives and programs

Proof Points

1. As a growing and booming industry, more and more students are interested in careers in coding and computer programming. By shifting the focus on current high school students, we will be able to create a graduating class of well-informed students looking to further their education
2. Many high school students are not currently aware of the opportunities that are available within this industry. By raising awareness among current high school students of the potential career opportunities available, and all that Epicodus offers, Epicodus will be at the forefront of the competition among other coding institutions
3. With the primary audience being located in the Portland Metro area, this will be a further incentive for potentially lower income students who may not otherwise be able to move away for further education, thus ideally increasing enrollment rates among this audience
4. Also targeting parents of current high school students, Epicodus can further explain its financial obligations and how they compare to competitors and traditional secondary education institutions. Gaining the attention of Epicodus from parents will aid in increasing enrollment rates.

OBJECTIVES

Objective #1

To raise awareness of coding career opportunities among 20% of high school students in the Portland-Metro area by the end of the academic 2017 year measured by web clicks and visits.

Strategy:

Create materials, such as infographics and posters, to connect with and educate high school students and career centers at schools.

Tactics:

- Create an infographic for schools to be used as a resource in career centers and hand out to students. The infographic would display the statistics about professionals in the coding industry and information about the benefits of gaining coding knowledge. The infographic will be distributed in career centers in five high schools in the Portland-Metro area and would be made in poster sizes and pamphlet sizes to be easily accessible for students, parents and faculty. The infographic would advertise Epicodus and how the school is an exceptional alternative to college.
- Give brand ambassadors postcards to hand out to interested students at high schools. The postcards will be double sided with each side containing information about coding careers and information about Epicodus and its programs. Ambassadors will give the postcards to students they come into contact with at the high schools. The brand ambassador program will be introduced in Objective 3 of this section.

Strategy:

Connect with high school students and parents on digital and social media to share coding career information and current news from Epicodus.

Tactics:

- Through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram Epicodus can share electronic infographics, alumni success stories and ambassador information with high school students and parents.
- Develop promotional videos featuring alumni, ambassadors and Epicodus staff to put on YouTube.

Objective #2

To engage 100 high school students in the Portland-Metro area with Epicodus by the end of the academic 2017 year measured by event attendance.

Strategy:

Encourage students to apply for Epicodus by hosting events to make them aware of the teaching style of the coding school.

Tactics:

- Coordinate five workshops on five various weekends starting at the beginning of the 2016 academic year and until the end of the academic 2017 year. The workshops will be two hours long each and will be interactive sessions where high school students can experience the Epicodus environment and style of teaching. At this time the students

can learn tips for applying and interviewing for Epicodus from the staff. These workshops will be opportunities to experience the classroom structure and meet the staff.

- Coordinate two, three-half-day coding summer camps during the summer of 2016. High school students who attend would learn basic coding techniques and create small projects. The purpose of the short summer camps would be to allow students to create projects that could inspire them to apply to Epicodus and learn more. Student ambassadors would be encouraged to work and participate at the workshops and summer camps. The cost of attending one, three-half-day summer camp will be \$100 per student.

Objective #3

To increase high school student applications to Epicodus by 20 applications by the end of the academic 2017 year measured by the number of high school applicants identified from the online application.

Strategy:

Develop a program to reach high school students and assist with the application process

Tactic:

- Create a brand ambassador program and give high school students an internship opportunity by making Epicodus known in their schools. At five high schools in the Portland-Metro area Epicodus would select three ambassadors at each school to work with career center staff to educate students about Epicodus and coding careers. All 15 ambassadors would work with the Enrollment and Alumni Director at Epicodus to utilize alumni testimonials and resources for prospective students. Ambassadors would be given information to distribute to students as well as products to advertise Epicodus.
- Go to the same five high schools that are being targeted by the brand ambassador program and table at their career centers. The brand ambassadors are in charge of coordinating the logistics of the promotion at their specific high school with the career centers. Supplies will be provided to decorate and promote Epicodus for the brand ambassadors to use. The tabling will be done three times during the academic year.

EVALUATIONS

Objective 1

It is stated in the first objective to increase awareness of coding careers and Epicodus by 20% among the Portland-Metro high school student population. We will evaluate this by monitoring interactions on social media outlets the whole year of the campaign. We will count the amount of comments the content receives, the number of followers gained and we will count the amount of content being shared by followers. Through keeping a list of students in contact with ambassadors and school career center counselors we will estimate the number of students and parents the infographics reach as well as estimate the amount of students the posters reach in the school.

Objective 2

For the second objective we will evaluate the success of the campaign by recording the attendance of the events. This will be done by a sign in sheet at the weekend workshops and the summer camps.

Objective 3

We will evaluate the success of the third objective of the campaign by accurately comparing the number of applicants to the populations of the high schools and comparing the number of applicants to the compiled list of students who were in contact with an ambassador.

Every two months the Enrollment and Alumni Director will check-in with the student ambassadors to track their progress. This will be done by collecting a list of names of high schools students, along with their contact information. This list of students will be used when looking at applications of enrollment to count how many contacted students decided to apply to Epicodus. At the six month check-in Epicodus will review the list of students contacted by ambassadors and compare it to the high school's population. This will determine what percentage of the student population at the high school is being reached by the efforts of the ambassadors.

To determine the success of the campaign Epicodus will review applications from high school students after the start of the campaign in 2016 and at the end of one year in 2017. At this time, Epicodus will identify on the application if the applicant is from one of the five high schools in the Portland-Metro area the ambassadors were present at. The effectiveness of the campaign will be determined by comparing the awareness of students at high schools with ambassadors to high schools without ambassadors. On the online application there will be a question asking how the applicant learned about Epicodus to determine what tactic reached the most high school students and what tactics need to be changed.

BUDGET

Objective #1 (Printed Materials)

- \$30 per 100 posters, 11 by 17"
- \$350 for 1,000 postcards
- \$80 for 100 fliers
- \$40 for additional printing
- TOTAL: \$500

Objective #2 (Special Events)

- Faculty salaries if not covered by the \$100 enrollment fees
- Cost of electricity for time in the Epicodus school building
- TOTAL: +/- \$300

Objective #3 (High School Programs)

- Brand Ambassador Program "goodie bags" for 15 Brand Ambassadors
 - \$300 for t-shirts
 - \$100 for drawstring bags
 - \$200 for printed materials, i.e. posters, fliers and brochures
 - \$100 for Epicodus labeled pens
 - \$150 for Epicodus labeled thumb drives
 - \$100 for labeled note pads
 - \$100 for labeled coffee mugs
 - TOTAL: \$1,050
- Table at high school career center
 - \$20 for Epicodus table cloth
 - \$100 for Epicodus informational poster boards
 - \$15 for balloons
 - TOTAL: \$135

TIMELINE AND PEOPLE

March 2016

- March 1: Contact career centers, explain Brand Ambassador Program
- March 5-3: Promote Brand Ambassador Program to high school students

April 2016

- April 1-30: Open applications for Brand Ambassador Program

May 2016

- May 1-7: Hold interviews for potential applicants
- May 15: Announce brand ambassadors
- May 21: Brand Ambassador training

August 2016

- August 20: Check-in with Brand Ambassadors
- First day of school

September 2016

- September 1-30: Brand Ambassadors periodically make announcements of Epicodus in classrooms
- September 18: Weekend Workshop #1

October 2016

- October 12: Table Event #1

November 2016

- November 6: Check-in with Brand Ambassadors

December 2016

- December 18: Weekend Workshop #2

January 2017

- January 8: Check-in with Brand Ambassadors

February 2017

- February 19: Weekend Workshop #3
- February 15: Table Event #2

March 2017

- March 4: Check-in with Brand Ambassadors

April 2017

- April 15: Weekend Workshop #4
- April 19: Table Event #3

May 2017

- May 6: Check-in with Brand Ambassadors
- May 13: Weekend Workshop #5

June 2017

- June 2: Farewell event for Brand Ambassadors
- June 24-26: Summer Camp #1

July 2017

- July 15-17: Summer Camp #2

August 2017

- August 19-21: Summer Camp #3

People

- Debbie Cravey, Enrollment & Alumni
- Emily Priebe, Marketing & Community Outreach
- Brand Ambassadors

PROTOTYPE – BRAND AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

In order to effectively promote Epicodus to the high school demographic Epicodus should utilize high school students as brand ambassadors to spread the word on their own school campuses. Now more than ever, high school students are looking for internship/volunteer opportunities. In a case study by Millennial Branding they discovered:

- **High school students are more willing to volunteer than college students.** 77% of high school students are either extremely or very interested in volunteering to gain work experience compared to 63% of college students.
- **High school students are more entrepreneurial than college students.** 72% of high school students and 64% of college students want to start a business someday. 61% of high school students and 43% of college students would rather be an entrepreneur instead of an employee when they graduate college.
- **The top three things that high school students are looking to get out of internships** are new skills (92%), work experience (81%) and mentorship/networking (72%). The top three things that college students are looking to get out of internships are work experience (89%), new skills (85%) and job offers (72%).
- **The top reasons why companies are offering high school internships** are to support local high schools (46%), gain new ideas (23%) and to find future college interns (18%).
- **High school internship programs center around social media.** 73% of high school internships focus around social media marketing projects, following by data entry (41%) and admin work (36%).

Codecademy is a free, online programming resource from the UK who has implemented the brand ambassador program into their organization. Potential opportunities for brand ambassadors include:

- Improve awareness of programs and how they improve an individual's chances of getting a job
- Hold Codecademy events and workshops, create communities of users who can support each other
- Provide outreach to local schools to continue our support to teachers in delivering the new computing curriculum
- Be the face of the program at your school
- Great networking, event management, marketing and coaching experience

**Are you looking to add to your resume
and get hands on internship experience?**



Epicodus

"90 percent agreed that high school internship programs can help students get into better colleges"

Epicodus is now hiring motivated candidates to be a part of our brand ambassador program where you will:

- work with local peers to promote the largest coding school in the Pacific Northwest
- stand out among other college applicants with internship experience
- learn about the rapidly growing technology industry
- gain hands on experience that looks great on a resume!

**For more information visit us on social media
or at <http://www.epicodus.com/brandambassador>**



EPICODUS BRAND AMBASSADOR APPLICATION

Please answer the following questions and submit to Emily Priebe, Marketing & Community Outreach Coordinator at epriebe@epicodus.com If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Emily at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Thank you for your time and interest in the Epicodus Brand Ambassador Program. Attach additional information if necessary.

(Please print first and last name) _____

(Address) _____

(Phone) _____

(Email) _____

1. What are your interests/hobbies?

2. What reasons do you have for wanting to be a member of this program?

3. What is your experience/background? (feel free to include your own credentials, if applicable)?

4. Describe yourself in 3 words:

4. Check your availability on these training dates:

- January 20th, 2016
- March 1st, 2016

My signature affirms that the information in this application is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that misrepresentations of facts are cause for removal from the program. All information and documentation related to service on this commission is subject to public records disclosure.

(Signature) _____

SOURCES

Burrows, Peter and Friers, Sarah. "In Tech World, Minorities Remain Quiet About Lack of Diversity". *Delaware Online*. November 14, 2014. Web.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Software Developers". Web.

"About: Code Academy". *Code Academy*. Web.

Lohr, Steve. "As Tech Booms, Workers Turn to Coding For Career Change". *The New York Times*. July 25, 2015. Web.

Schwabel, Dan. "The High Schools Career Study." *Millennial Branding*. February 4, 2014. Web.

CENTRO COMMUNICATIONS

THANK YOU!