

MASTERS STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH NON-PROFIT CORK CYPSC TO BUILD TRUST IN THE INFORMATION FOUND BY PARENTS ONLINE



BACKGROUND

Cork Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) is an interagency collaborative forum, established to identify and respond to the needs of children and young people in Cork city and county. The Committee is responsible for enhancing the lives of children, young people, and families at local and community level by improving the provision and delivery of key services.

THE NEED

Through its Supporting Parents Subgroup, Cork CYPSC identified universal supports for parents as a key gap in the range of provisions available. Cork CYPSC's engagement with parents revealed that online information was their least preferred method of getting advice with most parents fearful of the conflicting information available online.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Cork CYPSC was forced to transfer its services online. This provided Cork CYPSC with a dilemma: how could they reach a wide range of parents and caregivers, especially those who would not normally avail of their service? Cork CYPSC and its Supporting Parents Subgroup approached students of the MSc in Marketing Practice programme with this challenge.



THE SOLUTION

In consultation with Cork CYPSC, MSc in Marketing Practice students worked in two groups to craft reports detailing their research, insights, and guidance. These reports included a comprehensive external analysis of what students believed to be the organisation's largest competitors. They suggested online value propositions to Cork CYPSC, with the sole intention of raising awareness for the service and helping them to stand out from their competitors.

Students also devised both traditional and digital marketing strategies constructed around the main deliverable of building trust with parents and the online information Cork CYPSC provides. They outlined how these strategies would be budgeted and how their success could be measured. Students then presented their final reports with an accompanying PowerPoint via Zoom to the Cork CYPSC management committee and CIT lecturers. Both presentations were extremely well received by the non-profit.

BENEFITS OF THE ENGAGEMENT

The collaboration with the MSc in Marketing Practice programme provided Cork CYPSC with new strategies to build trust with parents. It also gave the organisation an insight into the business elements of marketing. Tracy Holt, CYPSC Coordinator said of the engagement, "I learnt a lot from the students in an area that is unfamiliar to me coming from a social work and community development background".

It also offered a valuable opportunity for students to work alongside a non-profit organisation, having different measures for success than for-profit would. This is especially the case for Cork CYPSC which, as a state-funded organisation, is not subject to typical quantitative measures of success.

Colm Smyth, lecturer on the MSc programme said, "Ongoing dialogue with key personnel was instrumental in ensuring the students understood the complex issues faced in marketing CYPSC Cork services. As a result, the Masters' students delivered original and practical marketing ideas, many of which will form part of new marketing initiatives at CYPSC Cork".

"The passion shown by the students, their well thought out ideas and research which demonstrated an understanding of our organisation, will help us to improve what we do."

- Tracy Holt, CYPSC Cork Coordinator

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