

Alcohol Priority Group
April 25, 2008
1:00-3:00

Attending: Wendy Rohleder-Sook
Diana Robertson
Isabelle Odegi
Leslie Rhoton
Heidi Garcia
Jenny McKee
Schuyler Bailey
John Wade
Mindy Rendon
Jay Vaglio
Michelle Smith
Chris Dyba

Guest speaker: Jon Schlitt, Sales & Marketing Director,
University Daily Kansan

Diana Robertson introduced Jon Schlitt to the committee. The committee then introduced themselves.

Jon Schlitt graduated in 2001 from the University of Kansas. He spent seven semesters working on the University Daily Kansas (UDK) when he was a student. After he graduated in 2001, he went on to work at the Kansas City Star for four years and was a territory sales rep in south Kansas City, Missouri. He handled a territory which was not doing so well, he was able to increase sales and turn it around before being recruited by a company in Fort Collins, Colorado, to do accounts. He was employed for 6 months handling the big-box furniture and carpet dollars. He then did management in Colorado as a retail sales supervisor for 2 years. He directly supervised a team of ten. In August of 2007, the journalism school called him when the sales and marketing advisor position for the UDK came up. He has always held a great love for KU, and was made an offer he could not refuse. It has been a great first year due to the football team winning the Orange Bowl and the basketball team winning the championship. Also, the Kansan advertising staff won best advertising staff in the nation, and they also won best college newspaper in the nation.

He is the Sales and Marketing Advisor of the student ad manager. The student ad manager comes to him for advice, questions, guidance, etc. The UDK is a completely student run newspaper. It is a paper with a 1.3 million dollar annual budget with less than 10% of that coming from university funds. Less than 10% of the budget comes from Student Senate and that is part of the campus fee. Most of the money needed comes from advertising. Over 90% of funds needed to run the paper comes directly from advertising. If the UDK has a bad year, they cannot lean on the journalism school or university. The UDK has to take care of itself. The money generated by that goes not only to the printing

of the paper but for the salaries of the students. There is a staff of 35 which includes account executives, creatives, and ad managers as well.

On the new side there is a staff of over 60. It gets tricky there because not all of them are on salary. Some are students who are in reporting classes in the journalism school who contribute to special sections and to other areas of the papers. There are editors, etc. In addition to Mr. Schlitt, there is a general manager and a new advisor. The general manager is Malcolm Gibson. He is a reporting instructor who has been at KU for about 10 years now. He is formally from the New York Times company. Patty Cromwell is an accountant for the UDK. The three of them are not "authority" figures on staff. The students determine both the ad and the news content for the paper. They come 99.9% of the time to Mr. Schlitt for advice on the advertising side or to Mr. Gibson for advice on the newspaper.

There are 35 people on the advertising staff. For retail side in terms of selling and placing ads in the paper, it comes down to 3 separate retail zones with about 6 outside sells people in each of those. The students are each given a list of 25-30 accounts which they maintain which is a good number. It is a tough task to manage this as well as going to school and maybe working a part-time job as well. The students do an excellent job, though. When good things happen like winning the orange bowl, it is great for revenue. The average newspaper across America last year lost about 5-10% in terms of revenue from the year before. The UDK is on track to finish about 25-30% over the previous year.

The UDK has about 25-30 active accounts a month. The accounts are not categorized (*i.e. restaurants vs. drinking establishments*); therefore, revenue from each is not readily available. The majority of revenue for the UDK, approximately 70%, comes from local accounts as well as university accounts and nonprofit accounts in the area. With any college town, restaurants and bars are going to be the good part of that. There are many establishments who advertise in the UDK. Thursdays are generally the day you see a lot of the establishments advertised in the paper. There is a perception this is due to the perception Thursday night is a big party night. The real reason the UDK has found businesses advertise on Thursdays is because that is the day the entertainment section (Jay Play) comes out, and many establishments want to get into it. Students hang on to the Jay Play section for a while. Establishments include Yacht Club, Brothers, etc. At the same time in an interesting parallel you will see Donald Strohl advertising as well as Wendy Newell. Their services are listed in case of DUI and how they will represent you in court. Student Legal Services is one of the accounts for the daily Kansan.

In terms of the ads in the paper, it is a 50/50 mix on whether the UDK creates them or whether the business itself creates them. The Yacht Club is an ad the UDK puts together every week. Contrast that with the ad for Brothers which comes directly from an agency and is very cluttered. In addition to a sales staff, we do have a team of creatives, and it is their job to work on all of that.

Questions:

1.) Does the UDK have a limit on the number of alcoholic ads?

No. There is no limit on the number of alcohol ads. In general on a daily basis, the staff look for a 60% editorial mix to 40% advertising. Advertising needs to be a part of the paper but not overwhelming. There is no limit on the amount of bars that can appear in the paper on a given day.

Once again, Mr. Schlitt reiterated the UDK is a student run newspaper, and because of that, the student ad managers determine what will and will not go into the paper in terms of advertising. The Kansan has its own separate constitution that has been written out, and again, the ad managers determine what does and what does not go into the paper. Mr. Schlitt gave the example of an establishment that wanted to advertise pay one quarter and get a cup, and drink as much as you can for one hour. For multiple reasons, they did not put the ad in the paper. One of the main reasons was it encouraged binge drinking which the ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) looked badly on, and the UDK did not want to violate the law. Other things which go along with the ad managers determining the ad content of the paper are solicitations from hate groups.

2.) Is there a filtering process?

Yes. There are a lot of times when the UDK receives the first incarnation of an ad, and if the account executive is not 100% sure it is going to pass muster, the account executive is supposed to run it by the student ad director first, Tony Berquist. If she has questions, which she generally does, she will bring it to Mr. Schlitt. They will look the ad over and make a determination. For example, ads from "All Stars" always have to be heavily filtered. There have only been one or two instances of ads that had to be started over. Binge drinking is something the UDK is conscience of. It is not something the UDK wants to encourage. An ad advertising a certain amount of alcohol be consumed in one hour is illegal and cannot be put in the paper.

3.) Is the Kansan a co-sponsor?

The Kansan has never been a co-sponsor with any bar. The Kansan has done promotions with local bars. Abe and Jake's Landing wanted to use the name "Sex on the Hill" for a party and in exchange the Kansan was able to put their banner up. It was not used to promote drinking but was used to get the Kansan out there and noticed. The UDK will not ever directly contribute money to buy alcohol for students whether they are under age or of legal age.

4.) What is the perception of role on campus?

The perception the Kansan wants to have is to be the voice of the students as it has since 1904; to be viewed as the number #1 source of news on campus, Jayhawks basketball and football teams, etc. It was the number #1 source of information for the basketball

championship. There were 35,000 copies of the UDK printed. Normal press run is 11,500.

Another role of the UDK is to provide a lab/learning environment for the students, both in advertising and in news. Multiple students have started on the UDK and gone on to bigger and better things. Mark Zeemen is a current publisher at the Kansas City Start started on the UDK. He ended up as the editor there.

5.) *Price difference/cost of advertising?*

The UDK does not offer bars a lower rate. There are frequency discounts based on volume per year. Also, bars are not charged more for advertising. The only organizations which are charged more are national advertisers.

6.) *Does the Kansan create ads?*

The Kansan creates about 50% of the ads, and about 50% of the ads are emailed to the Kansan by the establishment. The UDK tries to be respectful of the audience as well as good taste. Unfortunately, sometimes good taste gets lost in the process.

Diana Robertson questioned him on an inappropriate ad she had seen involving Godfather's Pizza. She questioned Mr. Schlitt as to the process by which the ad had been allowed to be put in the paper. She had approached the manager of the Godfather's Pizza who denied having any knowledge of the ad. Mr. Schlitt stated he was 99.9% sure the manager would have had to approved the ad, otherwise, he would have been aware of it. The ad had run in the "Sex on the Hill" section. Because of the fact the ad was featured in this type of section, the students most likely tried to keep the ad loose and in tone with this particular issue. In many cases they try to keep within the realm of good taste. This particular ad was not presented to Mr. Schlitt prior to being published. He raised a very heavy objection about the ad the day it happened. Since the ad came out, the manager of Godfather's Pizza has not advertised in the UDK again which leads Mr. Schlitt to believe the manager must have heard a lot about the ad. Mr. Schlitt again stated when an ad is created it is taken out and is supposed to be "proofed out" by the business owner.

7.) *Diana asked, "What are the standards or social responsibilities in talking about being a lab environment/learning environment? I am curious about those conversations and how that transpires? Where is the learning lab of catching the mistakes if you will or poor judgment/bad taste? How do you use it in advance as a learning tool before it is out there?"*

Part of it starts with training. There are standards we ask them to live up to. The big ones are no obscenities within the paper, no nudity within the paper, and there are areas like that which are addressed.

Diana then asked about the JB Stout's ad which in part read "drink heavy". He stated this ad had been created by a student who was going for kind of a tongue-in-cheek attitude

about watching the game. In knowing the student, he stated he did not feel her core intention was to encourage binge drinking. He thinks when she said “drink heavy” she was trying to encourage people to have a good time. Mr. Schlitt stated there could have been better wording for this ad. Mr. Schlitt said if something is questionable then students are supposed to bring it to the ad director to review or to himself to review, and they will give their opinion on it. Sometimes this protocol is followed, and sometimes people go ahead and put it in the paper; therefore, Mr. Schlitt usually fields a call later in the day regarding the ad. At that point it comes to a learning environment. Because it is a college setting and people are at the paper for a short time, the UDK is constantly having to educate/train students and so enforcing the standards can be challenging at times. Mr. Schlitt stated he will reinforce standards of good taste and of the law during training for the next semester.

8.) Would the UDK be interested in partnering with the Alcohol Priority Group or an ongoing Alcohol Task Force to help address a real problem the campus faces with the abuse of alcohol?

Mr. Schlitt stated he is not opposed to it, and feels it is definitely something that warrants further discussion. He feels it is an area worth pursuing as well as discussing it with his editor. Mr. Schlitt asked about what types of information. Diana said agreeing on some standards or recognizing what influences students as well as taking a social responsibility to help decrease the problems on campus associated with alcohol. Diana stated the message is not abstaining from alcohol and not doing ads but look at the overabundance and the social environment of alcohol.

Mr. Schlitt stated while he does not want to encourage binge drinking or underage drinking at establishments, he does want to make sure the establishments such as the Yacht Club and several businesses on Mass St. are still going to be able to make business. There are businesses that rely on the Kansan for advertising to get students into their establishments, and he wants to maintain that. He would like to find a middle ground and see what can be done.

9.) What are the current regulations?

There is not a written set of laws about what is accepted and what is not accepted. It again comes down to the Kansan acceptance committee which is the student business manager and student sales manager. It is their right to accept or refuse any advertising in the paper. Nudity and obscenities are not allowed in the ads. The Kansan will not allow something that will openly encourage binge drinking. They will also not encourage advertisement for a bar who serves minors. He stated he has not seen anything which he feels is out of control and borderline illegal.

10.) Heidi inquired as to Beer Pong tournaments being advertised in Jay Play which encourages multiple drinks which in turn encourages binge drinking.

Mr. Schlitt stated he will investigate further the ad containing the beer pong information.

11.) What are rights and responsibilities of newspaper not only with ads but stories as well?

John Wade used the example of a front page article in the Kansan which gave explicit instructions about how to make methamphetamines. John stated he realizes the right but where does responsibility lie. How do rights and responsibilities balance each other?

The newspaper should take the responsibility to make sure we are not promoting unsafe practices. If we are running ads for beer pong ads, it gets his attention up a little bit because the paper tries to discourage binge drinking. The responsibility of the UDK should always be to provide the best voice for the student body as best possible. Not only does this include news but students have the right to know about areas they can go out and have fun. At the same time while using that responsibility, the paper needs to make sure they are responsible for their own actions.

12.) Can the UDK publish a list of students on a daily basis who have received DUIs?

Mr. Schlitt stated it has been done in the past for Student Senate if there was a candidate or committee member who had received a DUI. Yes, the UDK does have a right to publish a daily list if it happens in the state of Kansas. They will not print DUIs if a student gets one while in another state. He stated he does not know if the UDK will decide to do this or not. It would need to go through the editorial staff.

13.) How would a student or students pursue the UDK printing this information?

Matt Erickson is the incoming editor for the fall semester and should be contacted in order to pursue this avenue.

Diana thanked Mr. Schlitt for coming to the meeting and answering the committees questions. Mr. Schlitt stated these issues had not been brought to his attention before. He appreciated the committee raising these questions/issues. He is thinking about different vantage points/perspectives. He is very open to listening to the recommendations the committee has. He cannot guarantee any of them will be put into place, but he will guarantee that he will work with his staff from day one to make sure that they not only follow the standards of good taste but they are also following the standards of the law. They will be more observant of “tongue-in-cheek” comments to be sure they are not encouraging students to do something which could potentially negatively affect the rest of their life.

Grid work: The committee worked on the grid for the remainder of the time, and decided to meet for another working meeting.

Working Meeting: Friday, May 2, 1:00-3:00, #308, McCook Room, Burge Union