Bridging the Gap

Danisha Mudalige, Julian Ahnelt, Qadir Zohair, Sarah Brennan, Victor Salim

University of British Columbia

COMM 388

April 04, 2017

Bridging the Gap

Design Solution

COMM 388 | Design Solution
Team Yin Yang

By:
Sarah Brennan
Julian An
Victor Salim
Qadir Zohair
Danisha Mudalige

We have to answer...

"What is the AMS Nest?"

— Ava Nasiri

Initial Problem

Our initial strategy focused on increasing the number of sales transactions which had dropped 2.7% during the first months of operation in 2017. We recognized there was a disengagement from the students. Through customer discovery, we found that students were confused about the product offerings from each food outlet. There was no defined brand for each food outlet so there was not a specific target market. This led to mixed messaging from each food outlet since the marketing strategy was conveying inconsistent information.

Collecting Insights

Through gathering these insights we recognized that the food outlets were trying to cater to the entire student population. They thought by targeting everyone, everyone would be willing to purchase their food offerings. Unfortunately, this strategy is failing them. Students are more inclined to purchase food from reliable venues as opposed to decoding messages from familiar food outlets in the AMS.

Pivot

To rectify this pain point for both the students and the AMS Nest, we proposed that the Nest captures demographic and psychographic information about their customers. This data would be synthesized and used to create a clear brand image for each food outlet. We hoped this information would better position the AMS office to make decisions about their food outlets and product offerings. However, we discovered that a solution is currently underway to collect demographic information on students who use AMS services, so we decided to pivot.

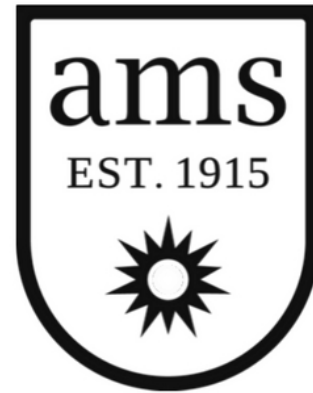**New Solution**

Our new solution still addresses student engagement and how to more clearly communicate with students. Instead of focusing on capturing data once the students have come to the Nest, we have decided to focus on how to reach students before they arrive at the Nest. Our solution focuses primarily on online communication and streamlining messages to be informative and easily digestible.

Innovation Intent

We are aiming to increase student engagement by informing first and second year students of the services offered by the AMS, specifically those services provided at the Nest.

The problem we are trying to solve
There is a growing number of food outlets popping up on campus which increases the competition for AMS food services. Many of these competitors are big name chains, which have an established brand presence and customer loyalty. This poses a great threat to AMS food services which have a very limited presence outside of the physical AMS Nest building and a significantly smaller marketing budget.

Why it matters
These brand name food outlets are positioned well to serve the student body. This will directly take away business from the AMS food outlets which are targeting the same demographic. Although the AMS Nest is a not-for-profit organization, the food outlets are a primary source of income to sustain building operations and other AMS services. Unfortunately, very few students are aware of how the profit generated from food sales is used to provide additional support for students. For example, students would be more inclined to purchase a coffee from Uppercase at a premium, over a drink at Starbucks, if they knew that money would be invested in AMS tutoring services.
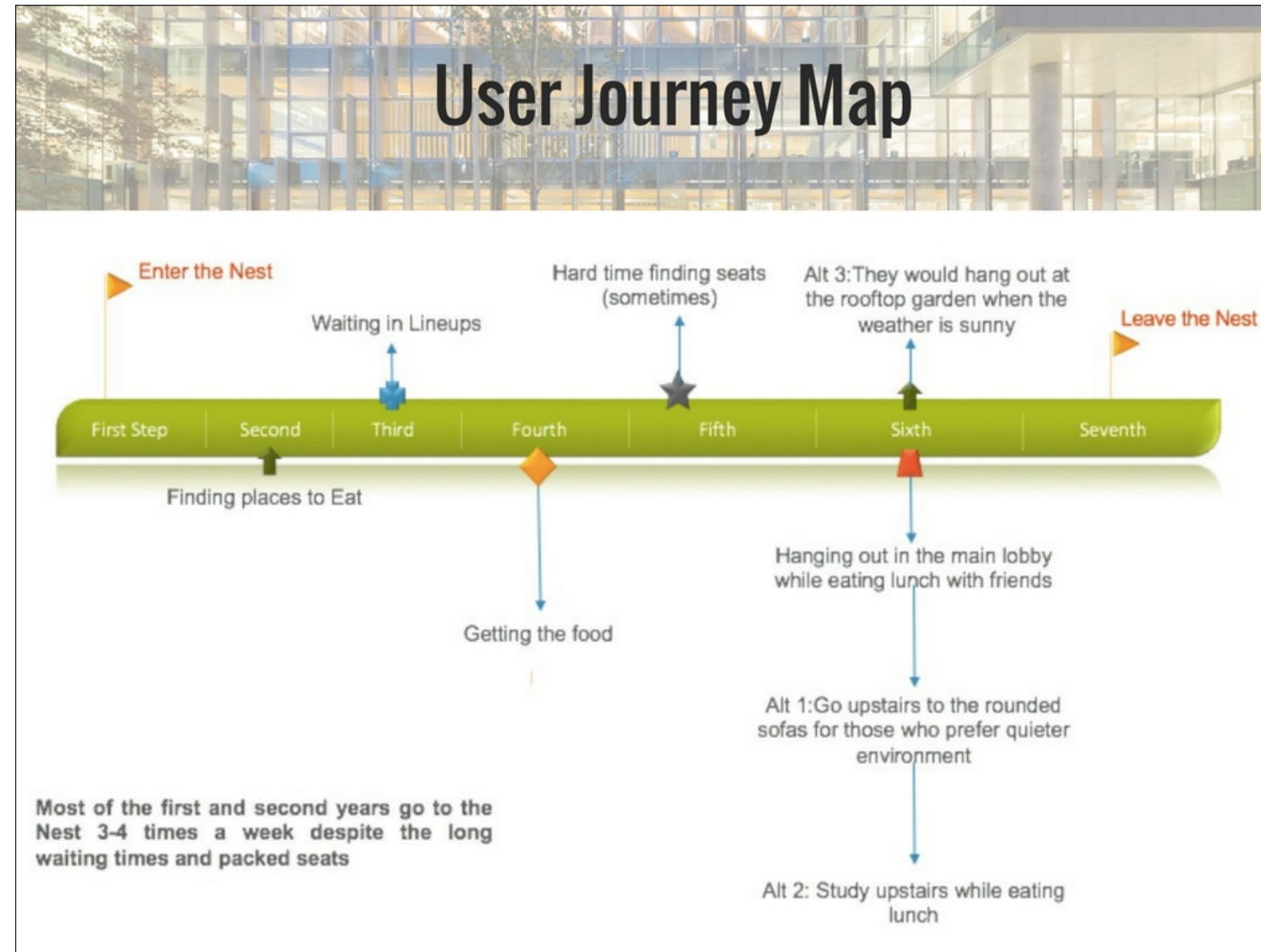
How other solution attempts have failed
Currently, the communication channels in place between the AMS and the student body are broken leading to mismatched information. Students are lacking relevant knowledge about the AMS Nest, which is causing the student body to become disengaged from the AMS. Students are a difficult audience to reach — they have many messages bombarding their multiple inboxes and newsfeed at all hours of the day, much of which is sent by the university. Communication from the AMS, in the form of email or social media posts, is outdated and branded similarly to messages sent by UBC. If students cannot differentiate the AMS from UBC, it will be impossible to inform students on the benefits the AMS provides and increase customer loyalty. Consequently, the Nest will suffer from this mixed messaging as UBC food services continues to be a major competitor

What will make our solution different and who is it targeted to?
We propose the AMS leverages their outbound communication to most first and second year students who are still getting accustomed to the campus and are curious to know more about the Nest. The communication strategy would be a means to increase engagement and close the communication gap. Our solution focuses on creating communication that is relevant to students with messaging that is informative and easily digestible. We want to emphasize the importance of determining what content is being communicated over which channels. Our revised communication strategy suggests improvements to traditional methods which are currently being used and new methods which can be leveraged for further engagement.

User Journey Map

Enter the Nest

Waiting in Lineups

Hard time finding seats (sometimes)

Alt 3: They would hang out at the rooftop garden when the weather is sunny

Leave the Nest

| First Step | Second | Third | Fourth | Fifth | Sixth | Seventh |

Finding places to Eat

Getting the food

Hanging out in the main lobby while eating lunch with friends

Alt 1: Go upstairs to the rounded sofas for those who prefer quieter environment

Most of the first and second years go to the Nest 3-4 times a week despite the long waiting times and packed seats

Alt 2: Study upstairs while eating lunch

Customer Journey Map

We utilized user journey as our method because it provides an overview of how students typically spend their time in the Nest. It is imperative that we record their activities and habits in detail so that we can understand their pain points, areas to improve and how we can better engage with them.

Based on our interview with a total of five first and second year students, we concluded that most of them only go to the Nest to have food while socializing or killing time until their next class. There is only one student that uses the Nest to study while having lunch, but she mentioned that it is too loud to study at the Nest even on the third and fourth floor due to the abundance of events and shows.

The pain points for most students are how they almost always wait in line for their food and finding a seat. At lunchtime, famous restaurants such as Pie R Squared or Honour Roll are packed with people lining up. Other vendors also have a similar problem which means the students have to wait for a while before getting their meal. It is clearly problematic if they only have a short break between classes and wanted to grab something quick. This means that the Nest will not be their first option in terms of getting a quick bite. For the students who stay and planning to eat in a group, some of them have to struggle finding a table because it is always packed during lunch time. Some students also mention despite the modern design, there is no clear structure and lack of efficiency in using the space because they could have added much more restaurants and dining space. Regardless of the structure, the Nest should find a way to speed up their operations to reduce wait time and have better seating arrangements for students.

An important observation we made is that the habit that most students have while in the Nest are pretty similar. They would find something to eat, find a place to sit in the main area near the stairs or tables, socialize and leave the Nest. They are not inclined to have any other activities beside to eat, socialize and relax. Even though there are a lot of activities or places they can go, such as the art gallery, student clubs, rooftop garden, rock climbing and other interesting venues, most students that we interviewed did not know such place exists. The only thing that stood up for them the most is the rooftop garden and they would go there sometimes to have their lunch if the weather permits. Most of them only go through the stairs to see that there is not a lot to offer. Thus, there is a big opportunity for AMS to communicate their offerings and services to their students so that they would be more aware of the variety of activities they can do while hanging out at the Nest.
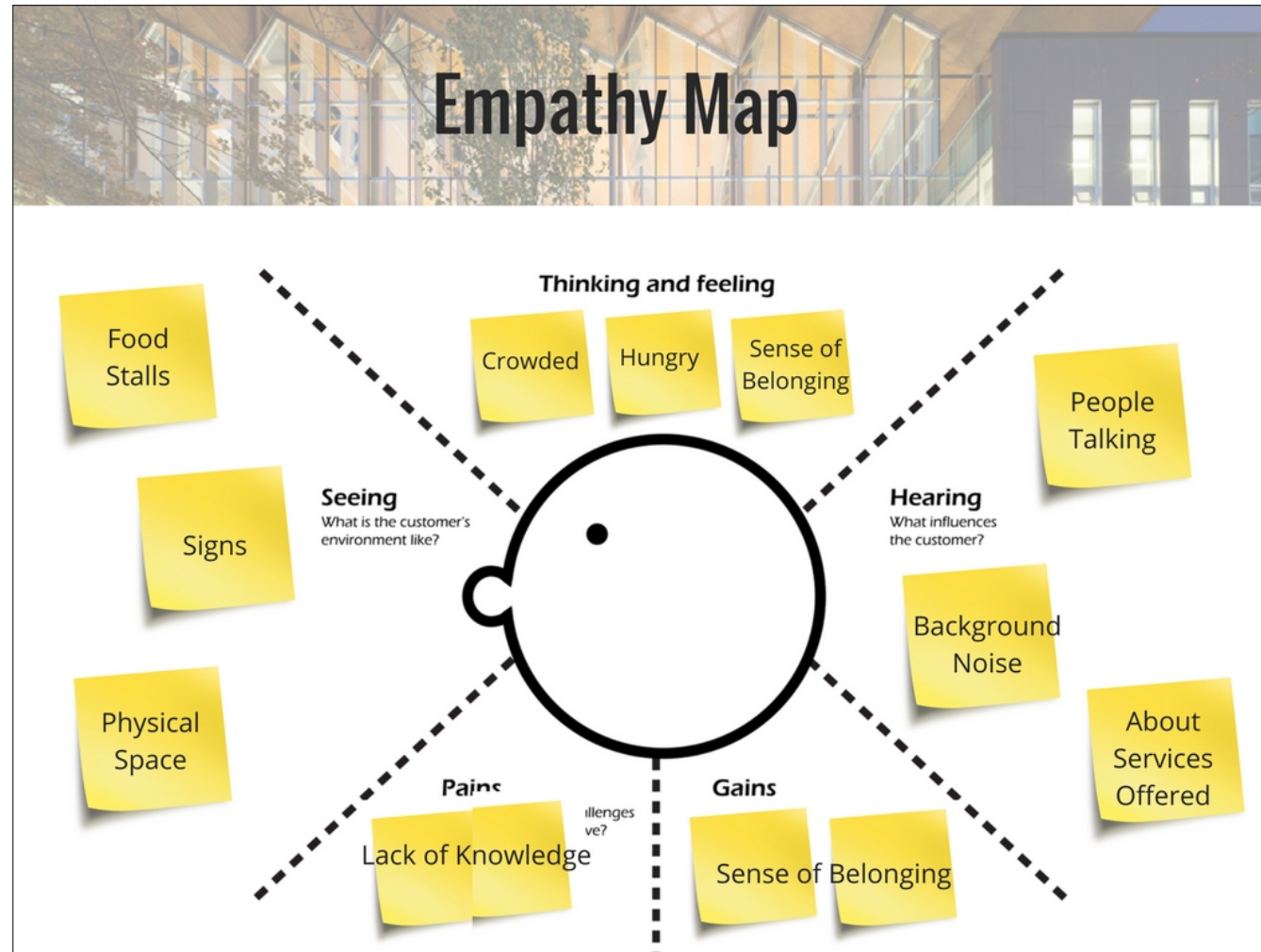
Empathy Map

Think & Feel: "Before entering the Nest, I thought to myself that I had not eaten anything the whole day. I felt a sense of hunger and felt lonely. I remembered someone telling me that whenever you walk into the Nest, you usually see familiar faces. The only part I am worried about is the crowd and long lines at every food vendor. This intense crowd during my 12:30 pm break does not let me see all the AMS services which is very unfortunate because I don't know what is being offered to me!"

Hear: "I hear people are constantly talking about how the Nest is always packed, and how big and modern the building is. I also hear the stairs and main lobby is where most of the people hangout when they eat lunch. I hear there are a lot of services and events happening at Nest but I never really understand what they offer."

See: "I see a huge building with a sustainable, modern looking design and people everywhere sitting on the stairs, and chairs, socializing with friends while eating their lunch. I also see signs around campus providing information about the events happening at the AMS Nest."

Say & Do: Before entering the AMS Nest, I usually say to my friends that I am hungry and want to go eat or I am tired of the libraries on campus and want a change of study space. I usually try to gather my friends to come with me to the Nest since I hate eating or studying alone!"

Pain: "I would like to explore what the Nest has to offer, but I do not know where to start looking."

Gain: I am excited to sit at the big stairs and socialize with my friends while having lunch. I feel a sense of belonging in doing this."

As we progressed with the empathy map, the only thing that came to our mind is how little information they are receiving about the Nest and their services. Unfortunately when we enter the Nest, we only see plenty of food stalls, a building with its modern looking design and students eating with their friends. However, they are not receiving any other information about the Nest. Therefore, by doing this empathy map, we realize that the AMS should use the huge lobby space to communicate to the students about their services and upcoming events.
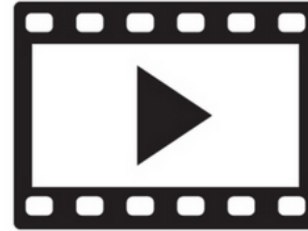
Our Solution Strategy

Our overarching solution to improve AMS Nest's outbound communication, centres around the media channels used to engage students. We propose improvements to current traditional methods of communication, in addition to pursuing new communication techniques. There are several actionable solutions we are proposing in each category.

Traditional Media Solutions

Social Media
We propose the Nest to improve upon their current social media strategy by curating engaging content that is relevant to students. Improving their presence on social media is beneficial for the Nest, as not only will it allow the content the Nest wishes to broadcast to be both highly accessible/visible and easily digestible, but it also allows for 2 way communication to exist between the Nest and the students they are trying to cater for. This is specifically possible through the use of polls and ability for people to leave comments on posts publicized by the Nest — all of which allow prompt and immediate engagement between the two parties. Furthermore, in addition to the inclusion of polls, we suggest the Nest further promote engagement through the use of contests, video content and articles, thus promoting the possibility of a conversation taking place too. Moreover, the use of social media will also allow the Nest to gather information in regards to students/its potential customers, thus providing them the potential opportunity to analyse said data and implement plans catered to their target audience.

Website
In addition to this, we also suggest that the Nest to further facilitate the use of their website, and improve upon the capabilities of the website. We understand that the website is currently in the process of a renovation; however, we believe that through the availability of a pop up chat box and a live social media thread, the nests outbound communication will increase significantly thus further helping its engagement with students.

Email Newsletters
Finally, the last traditional solution we suggest redesigning the user interface of email newsletters. Newsletters allow the Nest to collect quantitative data on the students who engage with this information by measuring who opens the message and track the number of click-throughs. This information is only valuable if you gather enough data to derive some valuable insight and to gather attention, the display must be visually appealing. Furthermore, newsletters are a medium to communicate more formal important information, as opposed to the daily casual posts that will be posted via social media. The newsletter should consist of advertising of current services the Nest provides, any current job openings in the Nest's food facilities, events taking place in the nest as well community activities (i.e. Storm the Wall).

New Media Solutions
In addition to all the approaches mentioned above, we have also developed New solutions, which are classified as method of communication that are not currently being pursued.

The First-Step Solution

Video Updates

The main solution we would like to propose is the video updates. We believe the videos are short, concise and display supporting material (e.g. graphics or other visualizations). They are easily processed by an audience with a short attention span and therefore encourage students to pay attention to them. Secondly, videos are typically shared on social networks, a platform where people usually spend considerable time on. Compared to text-heavy communication tools, not only would the likelihood of attending to the video be higher, but also would seeing the faces of people make the organization look more relatable and transparent. Thirdly and most importantly, the video updates represent a synthesis of several aspects of all other solutions. Apart from the obvious connections to social media, the videos can also be embedded in future AMS newsletters and break down all issues and news that might be included in a report.

The video updates would essentially involve different stakeholders of the AMS, ranging from the president to representatives of student clubs depending on the topics addressed. Initial videos should outline the services and competencies of the AMS in a concise and informative way, whereas subsequent videos should keep students updated about ongoing changes that are relevant to them and can potentially affect them. For example, AMS employees could talk about new initiatives they are currently involved in, whereas council members would briefly present important decisions taken at council meetings. Also, club members could also benefit from the opportunity of advertising their groups, further drawing in potential new customers to the Nest. Lastly, a separate segment of the video could be dedicated to the "employee of the month", which carries the potential of boosting employee satisfaction.

Prototype — Video Updates

As a prototype, we chose a video of student representatives of Wichita State University because it nicely summarizes the way we would envision the AMS video updates: Current relevant issues are addressed in a professional, yet personal way that makes students relate to their representatives better. However, in the video updates we would strongly encourage the collaboration of more AMS stakeholders in order to create a holistic and inclusive perspective on AMS-related topics. Based on the success of the AMS elections video we believe videos will garner attention and increase engagement.
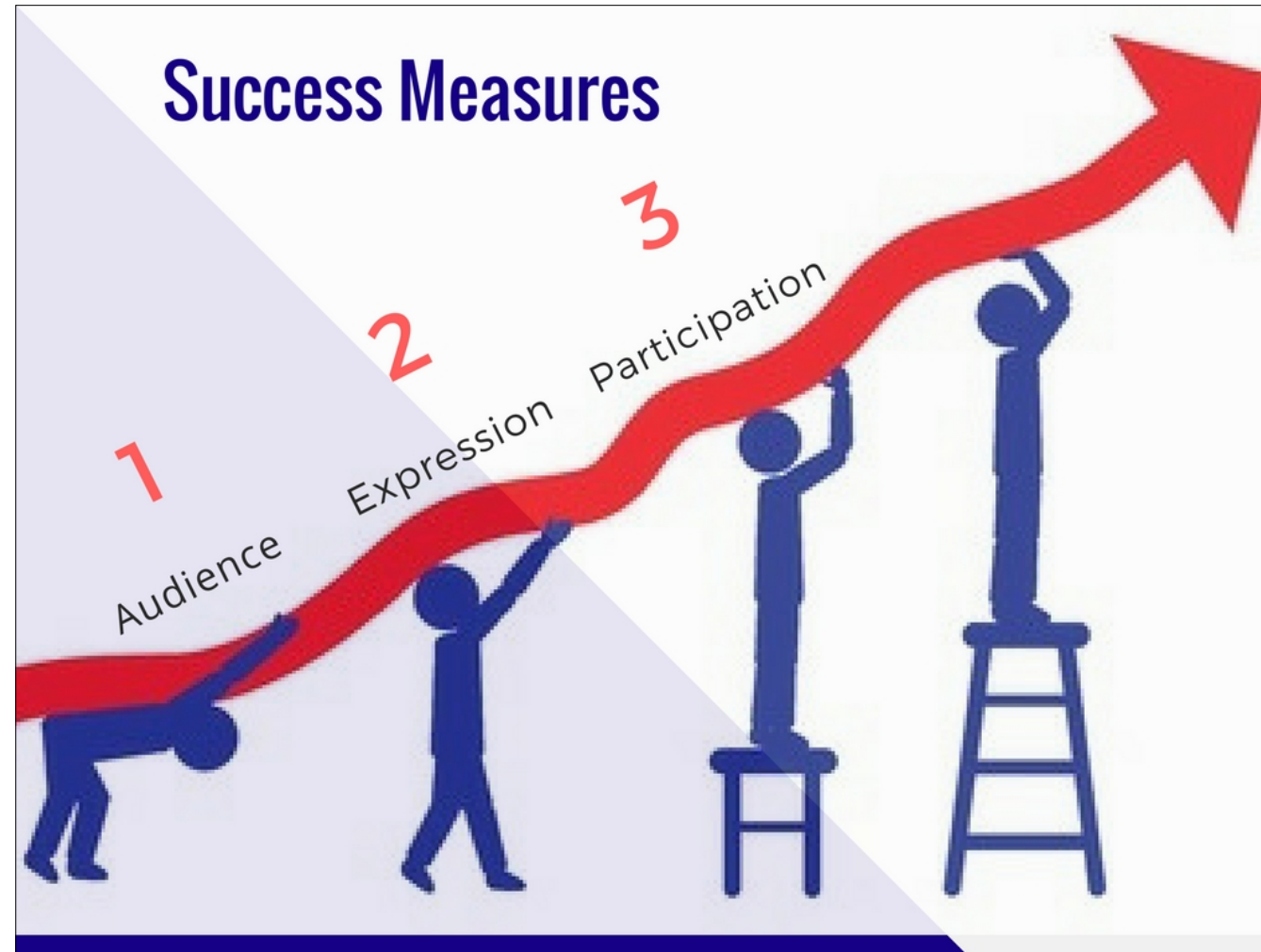
Success Measures

Success can be measured for the video updates in three key ways:

1. Audience
Reaching the right audience is most important and this can be easily measured through the number of views from the target audience or the video's percentage of views from that chosen demographic. By tracking these numbers and analyzing them throughout a certain time period, the AMS Executives can understand whether the targeted demographic has been reached or where the gap lies within the targeted demographic.

2. Expression
This is a way to measure the engagement of the target audience with the published video update. This engagement aspect can be measured by looking at how much watch time the video has accumulated. The watch time can be a total amount or an average time each viewer is watching the video. Since these videos can be published on YouTube, Facebook, and the AMS Website, the engagement level can also be measured through the number of subscribers on YouTube compared to the number of views, or the number of followers on Facebook, or the number of clicks it generates on the AMS' website.

3. Participation
By measuring participation, the AMS Executives can know whether the viewers actually liked and valued the video or just encountered the video while scrolling through their newsfeed. This can be measured through the number of shares or the percent of shares to the views encountered by the video.

Assumptions

The assumptions made for these measurements include:
a. the timeliness of the videos shared by the AMS Representatives,
b. the quality of the content produced in the video, and
c. the ability of the AMS Representatives to track and analyze the results of the video at a regular basis.

5 Week Implementation Plan

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Repeat for following month
Tasks	Recognize any new changes made in the AMS	Plan a strategy to showcase the changes in the video	Arrange for the requirements to shoot the video	Determine how to collect data	Understand what went well and what did not	
		Primary research to find direct concerns	Plan a strategy to release the video			
Activities	Conduct secondary research to recognize students' concerns		Shoot the video		Collect data and feedback from the video	
		Prepare questionnaire and allocate personals to collect data		Release the video on social networks and market it accordingly	Release it on the Newsletter and any other appropriate channel	

Attend beer festivals and other similar events

Shadrina Wicaksono, Second Year

She expected the Nest to be, "mind-blowing, modern huge, has a lot of restaurants and study space." The pain points that she has is that despite the huge space, the layout is inefficient, causing a lot of spaces to be left unused, and there is also not a lot of restaurants. Despite the pain points she mentioned, she still go to the Nest three to five times a week. She also always go to different food stalls every time to try out different food types. Compared to other candidates, she explores the Nest for any events, activities and services they offered. When she enters the Nest, she feels overwhelmed because of it is often packed. Aside from eating and relaxing, she often study, host club meetings and socialize with friends. Honour Roll and Grand Noodle are the two places she like to visit. The most impressive about the Nest is the sustainable modern design with lots of rooms and resources to accommodate almost all student clubs and other activities. She is at her happiest when she got a place to sit down with her friends and eat in peace. Her worst moment is where she could not find a place to sit down and there are long lines everywhere.

Empathy Map
Q: What do you think, feel, see, hear, say and do while in the Nest?
A:
Think: where to find seats, where to eat
Feel: She is always in a rush in competing for food and seats, overwhelmed
See: A lot of people and waiting lines
Hear: Conversations and noises
Say: "It is so crowded in here" and "this place needs to be bigger"

<u>**Appendix 1**</u> **— Customer Discovery**

Sheila Natasha Pribadi, First Year

Her expectation about the Nest:" I was very excited to see how much improvements that they have made, compared to the previous student union building. When I saw it for the first time, I really like the modern and eco-friendly architecture." She goes to the Nest two to three times per week and always try different food vendors. She does not explore any other activities or services the Nest offered because she does not know where to look for them and she feels there is nothing exciting in the Nest beside to hang out and eat her lunch. Her best moment is when she goes to the rooftop garden with her friends while it is sunny and enjoy the stunning view. Her worst moment is when she had to look for seats for more than 20 minutes.

Empathy Map
Q: What do you think, feel, see, hear, say and do while in the Nest?
A:
Think: what foods should I try this time
Feel: The place is overwhelmingly huge with a lot of people lining up
See: I see various types of food stalls and a huge building
Hear: I hear people talking with each other and some music playing through different clubs
Say: "I am not sure what I am going to have for lunch because it is very crowded."

Devika Davianna, First Year

Her expectation about the Nest is that it is the place with everyone regardless of age, major, etc. It can be too overcrowded at times, which can make the WiFi slow. She goes there two or three times a week and alwyas buy foot at the same place. She mentioned there are not a lot of options to choose. Despite that, she likes to go to the Nest because that is the place for her to socialize with all her friends. After eating her food with friends, they study together upstairs in a room if possible. If the weather is nice, they would visit the rooftop garden to relax and enjoy the beautiful view.

Q: What do you think, feel, see, hear, say and do while in the Nest?
A:
Think: I am about to have lunch and socialize with my friends in the lobby
Feel: I feel happy because I can relax and enjoy my lunch time
See: I see various types of people, food stalls, and other amenities that AMS offers
Hear: I hear chattering of people
Say: It depends on the context to whom I am talking to. When I am alone I don't usually talk to strangers and eat my food while studying upstairs.

Appendix 3 — Customer Discovery