

Creative Brief

Graduate Hotels & Natural Marketing



Background

Since 2019, Graduate Hotels has been the living room for the Fayetteville, AR community. The hotel is located in a centralized location in town that makes it easy for visitors to go watch a game, go check out the night life on Dickson, visit the Farmer's Market on the square, and alumni a place to stay that is right by campus. They offer unique experiences to their guests when they stay. The hotel's interior is customized to the Fayetteville community. They host tailgates, pop-up shops, functions, coffee dates, and a fun bar experience. Graduate Hotels has done a great job grabbing the attention of parents, alumni, and older generations. But they are missing a key demographic, Gen Z. Graduate Hotels wants increase their brand awareness among Gen Z college students. The reasons for seeking the attention of this demographic is to build a relationship with these college students for hopes of future stays at the Graduate, and to also attendance from students while they are still in school. The end goal is to have students recommend the Graduate to parents or guests when they come to visit, and for the Gen Z students to find comfort staying in the hotel, both as a student and as an alumni. A way to grab the attention of students is by utilizing the brand ambassador program already in place, Campus Insiders. While the program is great, there are ways to better engage with the students and market local events happening at the Graduate.

Target Audience

In order to successfully reach our target audience, we must have a clear concept of who are audience is. We need to know how to reach them, what is preventing them from interacting with the Graduate, and what interests and values engage them. Through the objectives of this project, the target audience we are trying to reach is college students aged 18-24 of all genders, backgrounds, and campus involvements. Below is a description of 3 large segments of these college students with more detailed explanations of who we can effectively reach them and engage them in the Graduates offerings.

User Persona 1: Girly Pop



Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age: 18-24• Gender: Female• Education: College degree seeking• Ethnicity: All• Family Status: Single/Newly Married
Jobs/Major Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Job: "College Jobs" part time, local jobs or internship• Family Responsibilities: Likely single or in a relationship
Hobbies/Passions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hobbies: Shopping, social activities, live music, walking, coffee with friends, and studying.• Values: Loyalty, connection, honesty, communication, approachability.• Passions: making new friends, trying new foods and experiences, working out, shopping, and planning.
Priorities/Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women who value being a part of a community like to stick together.• Budgeting and accessibility are important to them when they evaluate options of things to partake in.

User Persona 2: Frat Guy



Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Age: 18-24● Gender: Male● Education: College degree seeking● Ethnicity: Predominately Caucasian, but members of all ethnicities● Family Status: Single/Newly Married
Jobs/Major Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Job: “College Jobs” part time, local jobs or internship● Family Responsibilities: Likely single or in a relationship
Hobbies/Passions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hobbies: Happy Hour, Golf, Hunting, College Athletics● Values: Hard work, having a good time (often), loyalty, friendship● Passions: Working out, making new friends/social connections, finding a romantic partner
Priorities/Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Rarely go out of their way to try something new, and prefer to try new things that are already close to them.● They are searching for good deals that fit their budget, likely will only try something new if there is a good deal and it is compatible with their existing hobbies.● They are loyal to friends and family, choosing to participate in things in groups.● They are very likely to live on campus or near entertainment.

User Persona 3: Academic Weapons



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Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age: 18-24 • Gender: All • Education: College degree seeking • Ethnicity: All • Family Status: Single/Newly Married
Jobs/Major Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job: Likely jobs that require higher grade point averages or involvement, prestigious internships, internships that will lead to jobs post-grad • Family Responsibilities: Likely single or in a relationship
Hobbies/Passions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hobbies: Hanging out with friends, movies/TV, • Values: Hard work, high academic standards, responsibility • Passions: Planning for the future, working with peers, likely some level of volunteer action
Priorities/Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group is much more focused on academics rather than social engagement. They live by the motto “I’m in college primarily to get my degree and get a good job”. • While they spend a good chunk of their time in academic pursuits, they also want to relax or go out to rewind. • They are more willing to engage in spending in the search of a well deserved break or special treat. • They often do not have much time to spend trying many new things and are convinced their particular study spot is what has gotten them this far. • They consume a lot of caffeine, but also are likely interested in a healthier lifestyle.

Insight/Analysis

SWOT Analysis

After careful research and consideration of The Graduate compared to other hotel options in Fayetteville, AR, we came to the following conclusions about its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each hotel designed to reflect the location • Restaurant & bar in each hotel for convenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion into more college towns including Tuscaloosa, AL & Boulder, CO
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prices higher than other area hotels • Continuity is difficult since each hotel looks different than the other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AirBNB & VRBO offer extra privacy as well as amenities like kitchens

Empathy Map

We interviewed a diverse selection of students across campus and came to these conclusions when analyzing their attitudes toward The Graduate Hotel.

<p>What users say...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Graduate's location is immaculate • Girlie pops & frat guys reported attending functions in the ballroom 	<p>What users think...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Graduate needs to provide an incentive for them to visit • There places to study & bars to grab a drink that are more accessible
<p>What users have done...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users who have attended functions in the ballroom have bought drinks at the bar 	<p>What users feel...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Graduate is a well-respected hotel • It is unlikely they would study there based on their current knowledge of the hotel

Objectives/Outcomes

Objective 1: The Graduate Hotels wants to increase awareness among Gen Z college students.

- The outcome of this objective is for students to know that the Graduate exists, and with that, what all the Graduate offers to its guests and the locals in the community. They need to make students aware that they are welcome to come study, hang out, and get coffee in the lobby. The Graduate should also market their events and pop up shops to the locals and college students. It is important that the community is aware of the events and opportunities at the Graduate.

Objective 2: The Graduate Hotels wants to build a relationship with Gen Z college students while they are in school by showing them that the Graduate is the living room of the Fayetteville community.

- The outcome of this objective is not only short-term profit generation, but also longer-term brand loyalty. Graduate is looking to craft its user base for the future, guaranteeing generations of Razorback alumni choose Graduate Hotels whenever they visit Fayetteville, or any other college town. Graduate truly becomes a piece of campus and community by attracting students and inviting them to stay. This provides the economic impact of students spending money, but the chain is also able to gather insights into consumer preferences (often through spending patterns or physical observation) from students that can guide future marketing plans.

Positioning Statement

For Generation Z students, Hog Fans, and University of Arkansas parents and alumni who want a unique connection to the city of Fayetteville and all things Razorback, the Graduate acts as the campus living room that provides an unmatched Arkansas experience to its guests with inviting accommodations, a lively cocktail bar, and cozy study spaces likely to exceed any expectations. Unlike other hotels, the Graduate combines vintage university-specific memorabilia with southern hospitality to create an experience unlike any other.

Persona Statement

If the Graduate hotel was a person, this person would embody a balance of fun and whimsicalness with sophistication and uniqueness. The brand for the Graduate focuses on providing customers with an exciting and unique lodging environment, but it also prioritizes having high quality decor and premium services. This balance allows customers to have an appreciation for the hotel's aesthetics and allows them to feel comfortable.

Media Vehicles

Instagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be the brand's primary medium • Each of the target audiences utilizes Instagram as a way to unwind, stay informed about their peers, and often to shop • Most appropriate to gain brand exposure • Asking to be highlighted by the Experience Fayetteville or Arkansas Traveler will expose The Graduate to students asking themselves what they would like to do on a lazy fall weekend • Posts should be made that emphasize proximity to the Farmer's Market & Lights of the Ozarks, then encouraging guests to visit the hotel for coffee or a drink
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential in ensuring that the message is being received and the voice is being heard • Could give more meaning since it's an intimate advertising space • One way to secure student emails is by tabling on campus and utilizing the campus ambassadors who can host social media giveaways on campus and directly to students • Emails should include upcoming events, offerings and promotions
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This often serves as the most important brand image produced by the business • The addition of a "students" tab on the website with any of all information tailored to students can pose as a beneficial and informative outlet for students seeking to use Graduate amenities • It is also the last image the consumer will see before they book their stay • Graduate should take all necessary steps to ensure their website is appropriately compatible with Google's search engine optimization software and that they have produced branding that is clear and concise • The booking process should be as efficient as possible, being sure that the software records client emails for later dispersion marketing and promotional materials.

Deliverables

1- Cobranding and Partnerships

- Farmer's Market/First Thursdays
 - Discounting coffee during Farmer's Market hours drives foot traffic when consumers are already in the area
 - Discounting cocktails on First Thursdays allows Graduate to buy-in to pre-established marketing campaigns and consumer brand images
 - We found that students are eager to engage with their local college community. Many who come from out of town enjoy leaving campus and going to explore and see what the community has to offer. These experiences become foundational to their collegiate experience.
 - By positioning themselves alongside the iconic Fayetteville traditions, Graduate becomes integral to the college town scene.
- Local Restaurants- (have logos for Xuma, Taste of Thai, Cheers)
 - Offering discounts on coffee/cocktails if customer brings in receipt from restaurant on the square
 - Many of these restaurants are already Fayetteville favorites. They see steady customer streams and Graduate can easily capitalize off this existing brand awareness by offering themselves as a logical next stop after dinner on the Fayetteville Square.
 - To offset any potential idea that Graduate is cannibalizing sales, they could offer coupons or discounts at local restaurants to people who stay in the hotel
 - Not only does this drive the local economy, but students will likely enjoy these restaurants with their parents, then go back to Graduate for drinks or coffee after dinner.
- Experience Fayetteville Instagram
 - The Graduate should seek to get featured on the Experience Fayetteville Instagram account. This account features a whole host of local activities that gives students, parents, alumni, and locals ideas of how to spend their weekends or free time.
 - By getting featured, Graduate gains brand awareness but also benefits from the brand association of the other featured attractions. Students familiar with locations like Big Box Karaoke, Maxine's Tap Room, and Hugo's would feel more than comfortable also trying out Graduate if the brand is featured among the places they already frequent.
 - Graduate could use this exposure to kickstart their Fayetteville specific Instagram account and build a follower base.
 - Experience Fayetteville also highlights a variety of study spots and brand-specific promotions, allowing Graduate to show off its various position points to students.
- Fayetteville Flyer
 - Similar to Experience Fayetteville. Locally based travel guide (Jill Rohrbach)

2- Loyalty Program within the Application

- Loyalty Program
 - Points are earned with each visit, can be used to get discounts on coffee, food, cocktails, future stays.
 - Points can be earned from staying in the hotel or from ordering food and drinks.
 - Staying at the hotel will earn more points than ordering food and drinks.
 - These points would have to be accumulated over multiple visits, only accruing enough points to earn anything over a few visits so it incentivizes customers to come back.
 - Could make these points transferrable, so parents could give their students the points to be used when studying at the Graduate.

- Market deals on the app that are only available to customers that are apart of the loyalty program.
 - Whether that be a flash discount on staying at the hotel or a discount on a certain food item or drink, for a short amount of time, only on the application.
- Advertising Student Tour Rate with the App
 - ??
- Coffee Shop (Incorporating Application)
 - Ability to view menu online, and mobile order coffee
 - Have a punch card of sorts where after __ amount of coffees, the customer will get one free. Customers can keep track on the app.
 - Market happy hours on the app, and must have the app/loyalty program to participate in discounts.

3- Local Instagram Strategy

- Giveaways
 - In order to quickly increase the Graduate Fayetteville's Instagram's engagement, doing a giveaway will encourage people to follow and like the content.
 - An example of what this could look like is a collaboration with onyx to give away \$50 gift card and a free night at the Graduate. In order to be entered, people must follow both the Graduate and Onyx, repost the giveaway to their Instagram story, and tag 3 friends in the comments.
- Influencer Marketing (Specific Examples)
 - Influencer marketing helps boost Instagram and social media engagement while also encouraging younger generations to attend events in connection to influencer.
 - An example of what this could look like is an event with a Razorback Athlete that is promoted on the Fayetteville Graduate Instagram. The event could be a charity fundraiser or a promotional event for the Graduate and another local business.
 - The Inn at Carnall Hall did a campaign similar to this where they had an autograph event with Razorback starting Quarterback KJ Jefferson. KJ posed for videos and Instagram reels on their local Instagram and created a hugely successful event.
- Studying at the Graduate
 - The Local Instagram can highlight study spots, coffee shops, the bar and more. Right now, the Graduate isn't front of mind for students wanting to study for an exam. By posting information and offering an incentive, students are more likely to think of the Graduate to study.
- Event Programming Advertising
 - Booking a private event would be hugely beneficial to University student groups, but many don't know how or where to do this. Many also do not know that the Graduate has that as an offering. By making informational posts and posts reminding community partners of this feature, there could be a large increase in connection to the Graduate Hotel,
- Campus Ambassador Program Tie In
 - A great way to connect the campus ambassadors to a meaningful project would be by tying them into the promotion of the new local Instagram.
 - Ambassadors could host tabling on campus and offer an item in exchange for students following the Instagram. The item could be donuts, stickers or a free coffee from the Graduate Coffee shop.