CREATE VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

MENTAL FLIGHT SCHOOL
It was a brisk day in February, 2020, in Atlanta, when I woke up, got dressed, kissed my family and headed out the door to the airport. It was time to hit the friendly skies and continue my speaking tour that consisted of my leadership series on How to Be the Best Version of Yourself. March finally came so it was almost time to return home but heading to the final event in Los Angeles I saw the news while walking through the hotel with the headline reading something to the effect of COVID-19 is Spreading, with the Coronavirus numbers on the rise, travel may halt and the country my experience a shut down.

To myself, I’m thinking drama and fear mongering per usual, but who knows? I felt like it would pass because that’s what the news does most of the time is scare us, right?! haha By the time, I landed in Atlanta, the vibe had completely shifted, even on the flight back; flight attendants were wearing gloves already and some had masks. Everyone was nervous about what was happening and I was also worried about my career because I started receiving cancellations. It went from a spring,
summer and fall full of travel and certainty to “this is being postponed, this is cancelled, budgets are frozen, we don’t know what we are going to do, we don’t know what our students are going to do, to airports may or may not be shut down to your job as you know it has officially changed.” It was A LOT.

Could this be the end of a 15 year career connecting with you and being a part of building better community? Things were/are just as crazy on your end. There were/are furloughs, layoffs, not being supported by other administration or not keeping your safety as the number one priority, etc. As I said, it’s been a lot, right? What I realized after some reflection time was we will still need to know how to connect in a different way. While there’s nothing convenient about a pandemic or quarantine, it’s possible for staff and students to connect with each other regardless of where they are with more intention and it could create more freedom in some way. If staff can understand this virtual engagement piece, they can be a step ahead and even be pioneers on their campuses. They
can even teach strategies to students along the way to deepen their skill sets. In general, there are parts of virtual engagement that everyone gets on a basic level, but there are some best practices that will set you a part from others as well. Virtual engagement has been around for a while now; however, it has become more of a necessity at this point but if we can be more intentional about what we already know and the skills we have, we can flourish in our positions and quite possibly create new opportunities as a result. The new normal is officially here, I think…. The best thing we can do now is learn new skill sets which is why you are reading this and engaging right now.

* From this point forward, understand that everything you will read or see is intentional. Words and images are placed together to engage you as the audience. “If it works on you, it can work for you.” If you feel like any part of that story resonated with you or any point, question, statement that is mentioned from here on out connected with you, create it in our own words or experience to do the same for your potential audience.
What Are Your Biggest Struggles when trying to Create Virtual Engagement personally & professionally?

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Dedication:

To an ever changing world and all of you who make it better. The moment we think we have the job, the country or family figured out something else comes out of left field to humble and teach us in some way. I dedicate this to educators and advisors who continue to do their best to help engage those in need. Your work inspires, teaches and motivates beyond words. You are loved and appreciated and PLEASE remember to love and appreciate yourself.
Why did I create this guide?

For those who may come across this 10 or 20 years from now, the year is 2020 and we are in the midst of a pandemic caused by COVID-19. The world and certainly the United States has been thrust into quarantine causing the need for virtual learning and virtual programming to skyrocket essentially overnight. While there are virtual resources, there has never been a guide to help those along the way by way of ideas and helpful best practices for VIRTUAL engagement outside of what most may already know on a baseline level. There are some similarities; however, the differences can be frustrating when you don’t grasp the nuances and details of what it means to grab someone’s attention virtually. This guide is to
spark your already present ideas and shift your mindset to make virtual engagement more enjoyable and easier to scale!

I appreciate you in advance and thank you for all you do. This guide has a Masterclass component option that can be delivered live or via recording for your student leaders and staff as well. We are living in this world together. I have a bit of an advantage because I was figuring out the virtual learning space when it wasn’t necessary several years ago and few people were showing up to them, but now it’s a necessity so best practices will be shared as a kick starter as well as some pit falls.
About Me:

My name is Stan Pearson II, MBA. I’m an award winning speaker, celebrity mindset consultant and virtual engagement strategist as well as a student affairs ex-patriot. You will be introduced to a few business strategies as well. Why, you ask? Because everything is business whether we want to admit it or not. Your roll has a foundation of marketing and advertising. You could literally have that on your resume if you decided to shift your career or pursue a different aspect of it. It just hasn’t been taught to you that way. Engagement/Virtual Engagement is about marketing, branding and advertising. Whether it’s a degree in higher education, law or medicine, one thing remains the same. We must sharpen the skills that already exist within us and be more intentional with your abilities to make your job easier. This guide will help you begin the process you’ll need to relieve yourself of some
stress and you learn how to engage virtually. You already have the skills, we just have to sharpen them and teach your students or colleagues how to do the same so they can increase involvement, attendance, membership, retention and healthy environments to work in.

- Stan Pearson II, Chief Visionary, Mental Flight School & Breathe Diversity, LLC
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* But First: 10 Mistakes Often Made When Trying to Create Virtual Engagement: #5 is something that happens often during in-person events, but many have fallen into the same issue virtually & #7 creates the most loyal and appreciative community members.
Mistake #1:
- **Assuming that the same approach will work for every event or audience.** Language and approach matters, especially in marketing. Now, before you say I'm not into business, marketing or advertising, I must tell you now that EVERYTHING is business, marketing or advertising. Using words and resources to grab attention is simply marketing and putting it where someone can see it is advertising. That goes for anything or any place you want someone to show up. The way you'd invite a professor may not be the way you invite a student and the way you may invite a student who is involved in greek life or anime is not the same way or language you would necessarily use to invite an athlete. There are obviously exceptions to every rule, but understand this mistake and consider your language when trying to attract a particular audience.

**What are some different approaches you can use to invite professors or students?**
Mistake #2:

- Thinking that posting is the same thing as marketing and advertising. While on the surface one can argue that it is marketing and advertising, ask yourself this. When was the last time, "if" you are out and about or on social media that you saw ONE McDonald's ad or ONE car commercial or ONE ________ fill in the blank commercial. You'll never see just one State Farm commercial because just one wouldn't get your attention. So, while one person might see your post, what about all of the other people who could be there? There are different strategies, but the most important piece is understanding simply posting or doing one video and walking away hoping for people to show up or engage, is not nearly as effective as we'd hope it to be.

How can you be more creative or intentional with your marketing and advertising?

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Mistake #3:
- **Not going where your audience is.** You're thinking Stan, I'm on social media and that's where my audience is. haha You are partially right. Where are they on social media though? What hashtags do they search for, what groups do they participate in, what kind of things do they like and how old are they? Knowing what they like and do is one thing, but going to those places to find them is slightly more involved, BUT worth it. It's like great customer service. When you go to them and provide them with service, they will then come to you and bring their friends.

**What are the best ways to locate your audience?**
Mistake #4:

- **Engaging on the wrong days and times.** Imagine having events on Mondays after forgetting to promote Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Unless you use the correct language and have Monday built in for someone to look forward to, Monday events flop for a lot of in-person and virtual events. If you had a MoTown Monday event where you played all MoTown Music, that would probably go over well because it's built in. If it is purposely done, you can work it and develop it, but otherwise, Mondays and Fridays can be difficult days to pull off. I'm sending this on a Monday on purpose to start your week off with something that can help or provoke thought going into the rest of the week. It's light and practical if you want to come back to it. Regarding time, you want to strike while the iron is hot or in this case when things have cooled down a bit. Find the sweet spot of days that make the most sense for your audience.

**How can you test or survey to find out the best days/times to program?**
Mistake #5:

- Counting on the regulars. I worked in student affairs before and even in business, it's easy to know the same people who will show up no matter what you do. Those are the low hanging fruit people. What about when they have something to do or somewhere to be? That person who normally brings the crowd is out of pocket along with their crew. The best way to guarantee regular attendance and engagement is to bring a steady flow of new people who will enjoy what you're offering. Think back to the last time you were at the mall or heck, one of my personal favorites COSTCO! Restaurants or your favorite grocery store have people in the aisle or around the store giving you free samples... Ahhhh, my favorite. haha Those samples are to introduce you to something new. There are already people who buy it, but they want more people to buy it. It works, so it's time to create something similar on your end. The regulars are awesome, but imagine creating new regulars for your engagement! Engagement isn't always the easiest to navigate, especially with so much going on, so feel free to let me know if you have any questions. It can be overwhelming, but delivering ways to lessen your load can prove helpful.
How can you build new followers and relationships?

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Mistake #6:

- **Giving the wrong people the wrong job.** We all have our strengths and weaknesses. We have to give other people an opportunity to succeed and fail. Allow them to win and celebrate them for their win and if they fail, share their failure with them and work towards the win. Did that make sense? Be willing to share failures with them in an effort to create and develop ownership and autonomy in the opportunity you’ve given them within your system. If they’re social, task them with social media. If they write, task them with copy/writing and headlines. If they are comfortable hosting, make sure you have a professional or student who is EXCITED about hosting whatever event you’re hosting virtually. People can tell when someone cares. A professional or someone with energy will make any event the kind of event that someone wants to attend. The energy must be the same regardless of the event you’re hosting. Don’t cheat events. You can even have a hashtag chair. They stay on top of live streams and hashtags. Be intentional and the energy of your events will respond.
How can you do better about assigning the right tasks to the correct student or colleague for the job?
Mistake #7:  
- Forgetting to build rapport with your potential attendees. People will attend your event if they do one of 3 things: know, like, or trust you. The ultimate experience happens when you are able to develop all 3 components. Helping your audience know, like and trust you will create regulars and people who will speak on your behalf and recommend you for others.

How can you build rapport?

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Mistake #8:
- **Forget to ask for a testimonial after each experience.** This is a major miss. What’s better than asking; “did you have a good time?” It is better to ask, “what was your favorite take away, what gave you the best ah ha moment?” This is more intentional and you are able to repurpose these testimonials to create better attendance for your next events. You can also use these in conjunction with future marketing materials.

Where can you use testimonials and how can you ask for them?

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Mistake #9:  
- Not allowing time in the beginning of the program or experience for people to get to know each other. Hosting an event virtually is similar to hosting an event at your house or campus. You go out of your way to make sure everyone is comfortable if you want people to stay there or come back in the future. The more community you build early on, the more likely your audience will be to build community on their own without you having to do more work. If we can help them feel comfortable in the chat with authentic questions, discussions and fun interaction, you will build great morale. People need that now more than ever.

What activities can you do at the beginning of programs to create community?

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Mistake #10:

- Forgetting to create series within your events. Understand that when you create different series online and offline, you are able to build momentum. Ex. If you come to at least 2 of the 3, this happens. You may have speakers/trainers who in the past you may have one time on campus engage your audience with a 3 or 5 part series to create a rhythm so your audience has something to look forward to or build on. You can build a series with BINGO, cooking, baking, dancing, drawing, you name it. Feel free to involve parents in your series as well. People are spending more time at home as well. What better time to get more buy in than to include family into your series in some way.

Which events or experiences can you turn into a series?

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The above 10 mistakes provide an incredible opportunity for office round tables and discussions on how to maximize your knowledge. They can also help you avoid pitfalls while creating an understanding and a clear path of communication resulting in a better office environment and morale. The slides to my masterclass, How to Create Virtual Engagement are to follow. If you’re interested in the live training or found this beneficial, feel free to email or contact us:

e-mail: stanpearsonii@gmail.com
website: www.breathediversityllc.com/contact
1.

www.stanpearson.com/contact
I don't know everything...but I've been told I'm pretty good. I'll give you my best and this will be a positive & fruitful experience.

You Got This!!!

I APPRECIATE & RESPECT THE EXPERIENCE IN THE ROOM.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT AS WE BEGIN...

Everyone in here has a skill set...
Show and Tell; Establishing Credibility is Key!

Stan Pearson II, MBA
Chief Visionary, Mental Flight School
* Resume
- Award Winning Bi-lingual Speaker: 15 years
- Business Strategist: 10 years
- Student Affairs Ex patriot: 4 years
- Celebrity Mindset Consultant: 4 years
- Semi-Pro Salsa Dancer: 12 years
Social Proof is Paramount!
Sharing what's important to you, will remind your audience of what's important to them.
Engagement
Who are you engaging & Why......
Do they like, know or trust you?
Definition:
Getting People to Do Something...
Appealing to them to inspire them to act, feel, participate or share...
We will be discussing

- The playing field is leveled.
- Inner Conversations
- Outer Conversations
- Wish 100
- Creating New Culture
Breathe & Belong
Human to Human
Shared feelings create community...
Less is More

In language & Activity

Connecting & Engaging
Your Audience Means:
Meeting THEM where
they are and taking them
with you.

Facebook Group
Slack - GroupMe
Off-line Series: INCENTIVE
(bingo is a one and done)
What does inclusivity look like in engagement?
* It is the ability to welcome and promote interaction with any audience.
This means having conversations that include ALL groups.
Human To Human Remember...
How can we engage?
Drawing
Cooking
Dancing
Holidays
Talent
Discussion
DJ Experience
Genre Bracket
Rock, Paper, Scissors
Events for Kids/Families
How to: Bake/*Bartend*/Cook
(What’s enjoyable/fun/need to know?)
( Have an Emcee or Host)
Connection
Getting to Know Who
Inner Conversations

- Story of Resilience
- When you've seen the best in Humanity.
Outter Conversations

- What’s working...
- Where could you use some help...
(Relative Posting & Interaction)
Social Media Tips
5 Minute Bootcamp

Why would someone engage?

You made them feel.
You made them think.
You asked them a question. (Did you know...)

Graphics are not the only answer.
Instagram Live - Facebook Live - Youtube Live
Linkedin
Show the Journey.

Good lighting, Clear Text, Relevant Images
Engaging Forward

Create Reciprocity & Opportunity to Re-engage

Wish 100 Starting-Lineup
The Groups Who Have the Keys to Your Ideal Audience

Is it possible to get their attention?
Can they benefit from the relationship?
How can you give them incentive?
Starting - Line Up

Go to people in the right positions. Remember, this will create more engagement with less work. = WINS!
Entertain, Engage, Educate: Create Your System:

- Did you create an experience?
- Did people learn something?
- Is your audience thankful?
- It’s not just another meeting/event, it’s an opportunity.
- Give them a way to stay in touch
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(themindsetguru.com)

Have you found this helpful?
Let's Chat!