

“Real Talk: What UWI Students Really Think – And What We Did About It!”

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This presentation will explore the outcomes of focus group discussions conducted with first-year students in October 2023 and how these outcomes influenced marketing strategy and tactics to improve the prospect and student experience. Our focus groups provided critical insights into students' perceptions and experiences and these discussions, held early in their academic journey, covered several key aspects of student experience, including perceptions of the university, brand identity, influencing factors for choosing The UWI and campus life. In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, understanding and responding to student feedback is crucial in creating a student-centered environment that supports success and engagement. At The University of the West Indies (UWI), first-year students are a pivotal target group for shaping future strategies that enhance the overall prospect and student experience and we will give some insights into this process.

The objective of this presentation is to demonstrate how feedback mechanisms, such as focus groups, can be effectively used to assess the student experience and guide administrative innovation. By reviewing the key themes that emerged from the discussions, this session will illustrate how The UWI used these insights to pivot and adjust its strategies to better serve incoming prospects and students. The focus will be on how the data collected was used to identify areas for improvement in both administrative processes and student engagement strategies. This includes the use of our team of Student Content Creators, the establishment of our TikTok platform, more strategic use of our Marketing Student Champions and increased use of video in our social media posting which led to increased engagement.

The scope of the presentation will focus on the actions taken based on the feedback from the focus groups, highlighting specific adjustments made to improve the student and prospect experience. This approach will underscore the importance of creating a responsive and adaptive system that not only gathers feedback but also ensures that it results in actionable improvements.