

ASSIGNMENT 3: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS FOR CAMP KESEM

CONDUCTED BY
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Background:

Camp Kesem's main objective in conducting in-depth interviews is to understand what motivates college students to become involved with an on-campus organization, specifically organizations that are service-oriented. We are ultimately interested in the ways we can increase Camp Kesem's recruitment and retention rates across the country and at UNC-Chapel Hill's Camp Kesem chapter, which has struggled with recruitment and retention efforts in the past.

Method:

The interviews were conducted on Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019 at 12:30 p.m. and 12:45 p.m. Interviews took place in Carroll Hall, classroom 143, on the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's campus. Both interviewees were female college students in the Hussman School of Journalism and Media at UNC. One interviewee was a sophomore, and the other was a senior. Each interview was roughly 15 minutes long. In all, there were 11 planned questions which explored motivations for volunteering, involvement in student organizations and perceptions of and experiences with fundraising as a student. Moderators asked probing follow-up questions on a case-by-case basis which depended on interviewees' responses to initial questions.

Results:

Similar to Camp Kesem's findings in its secondary research and focus group analysis, having enough time is a major deterrent for students' involvement in a nonprofit student organization. Both interviewees said that mandatory weekly meetings prevent them from getting involved. Interviewee #1 mentioned the general inefficiencies she sees at weekly meetings run by students and how they are usually wasting time. When asked what it would take for interviewee #2 to get involved in an organization like Camp Kesem, she said, "Not a lot, honestly, I just don't really have the time," referring to weekly, mandatory meetings. Also in line with our previous findings is the self-centered nature of volunteering among this demographic. When asked what generally draws her to getting involved in an organization, interviewee #1 said she likes "finding stuff that actually matters to [her]." Interviewee #2 said anything that involves cancer will make her want to get involved because her dad is a cancer doctor.

In digging deeper, the self-centered motivations appear to manifest themselves in a variety of ways, one of them being the importance of visibility of their fundraising efforts. Interviewee #1 said that volunteers want a big incentive or project to work toward that makes them feel like what they are doing actually matters. She said she would be more drawn to volunteer for an organization if she is "doing stuff that is like a big event and involves actually leaving a room and not just requesting money... because I would know I was part of something that people could see and I could see." The majority of interviewee #2's fundraising background was big event planning as well, one of them being a "fancy dinner party" where she and her high school class served a six-course meal and raised over \$7,000 dollars for ALS in one night.

Through these in-depth interviews, Camp Kesem also developed new insights. Interviews seem to suggest that Camp Kesem's visibility on campus is poor and is affecting involvement. When interviewee #1 was asked how she was recruited for Carolina For the Kids, a student nonprofit organization, she responded, "I think it's just well known." As a first-year she tried to find the Fall Fest sign-up booth for Camp Kesem, but couldn't, and forgot about the organization

entirely until hearing our team's discussions in class. Interviewee #2, who is particularly interested in volunteering for cancer patients, as mentioned above, didn't even know what Camp Kesem was prior to her interview. She said she finds out about organizations through posters and flyers, particularly ones in the bathroom stalls and the ones she can see while walking around campus. Generally, this makes sense because both interviewees talked about how many organizations and causes there are to support on campus and how it can be overwhelming. Most of the time, both interviewees indicated that they would ignore organizations and causes all together because of how busy they are. Interviewee #1 said, "If I stopped at every single person that is trying to individually fundraise I would get nothing done and I'd, like, be late to class."

Discussion:

The richness of the information obtained depended upon the interviewees' willingness to talk about the subject, which fortunately, in this case, both were very willing to talk. If I were to redo the interview, I would have prepared more questions, and I wouldn't have been afraid to take more time to process follow-up questions. Coming up with questions on the spot was hard to do in a non-leading or non-biased manner. I would also make sure to screen participants beforehand. Luckily, the participants in these interviews had a lot of volunteering experience in the past, but that might not have been the case without initial screening questions before conducting a full interview. Obviously, we would need to conduct more interviews with a more diverse audience, as these two interviews do not reflect an accurate sample of our population. These findings provide new insights to students' volunteering motivations, and we think that Camp Kesem should further investigate the importance of big and visible fundraising events in order to recruit more volunteers as well as the general visibility of Camp Kesem on UNC's campus.