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 BERMUDA
Just the Way

25 post-grad students
3 months of planning
1 big time event



by Bevi Yap



Amy Mangan



Josh Gottlieb



Gemma Barker

Centennial College's Festival Events & Conference Management students were recently charged with organizing the first-ever alumni event for the School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culture called Rooted In, Branching Out. As an ambitious by-product, it was decided that funds raised from the event would go toward a scholarship for a faculty student who demonstrated financial need.

The students' instructor, Sandy Biback, divided the class into 12 committees including green, budget, critical path, registration, marketing, food and beverage. The rest was up to the students, our next generation of planners.

Read how they fared in a collaborative chronological journal written by four of the students over a three-month period leading up to the big day.

branching out



01/13/2011

Amy: I'm really proud that our **Rooted In, Branching Out** event will be the first-ever alumni function in the history of Centennial's Festival Events & Conference Management program. Fingers crossed for April 15.

No time to waste.

01/22/2011

Bevi: Do we have money? Do we not have money? I wish people would stop asking me about money for their committees! Yes, I'm on the budget committee. No, I have no idea about our budget. No one's told me yet.

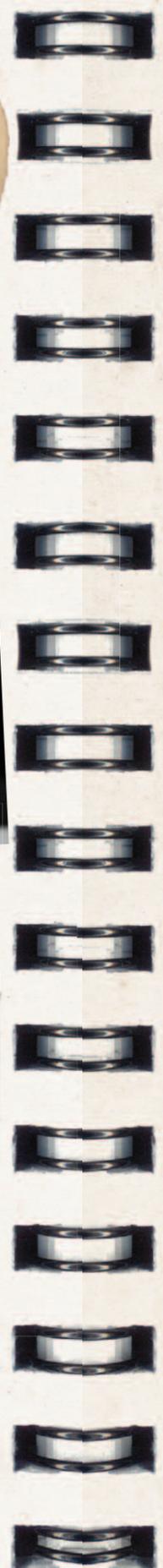
01/26/2011

Amy: It was meeting after meeting today as we refined the list of potential sponsors. **Phew!** Tomorrow we'll set sponsorship levels and compile contact lists... Been a long day.

01/26/2011

Bevi: So, as lead of the budget committee, my first duty is to compile an expense forecast. The purpose is to determine how much we want to spend, then bring it to The Powers That Be—meaning the faculty. And then, um, somehow this money will magically appear... Hmm.

branching out



01/26/2011
Gemma: Alright! Amy and I are taking on the critical path responsibilities. With 12 committees working toward the same goal, we need to create an organized system for communication between teams. But how? ... Bingo! A (free!) file hosting service.



01/31/2011 **Bev:** Just received the last budget request from the committees and guess what happens when you don't provide ballpark figures? People start writing wish lists like letters to Santa. By the looks of this forecast, we're 2k in the hole.



02/03/2011
Bev: **AGHHH!** The faculty has just informed us that we have a **ZERO-BASED BUDGET**. That's right, no money. Maybe I'll go to the fountain in the atrium and check for change.

02/04/2011
Amy: Feeling like some folks are not as motivated as others. There is just too much to do right now. On the bright side, the website looks amazing and should entice everyone to get cracking. rootedincentennial.ca

02/09/2011
Bev: We've gone back to the Stone Age. We can't do online registration because we don't have the funds to maintain security. So we're stuck with fax, phone and snail mail.



02/16/2011
Bev: Good news! The Centennial College Residence and Conference Centre (CCRCC) is only charging us for labour. And all the rest of the expenses will be at cost! **HURRY!** Budget has been revised—and revived! We can generate approx 1k towards the scholarship if we have 150 attendees.
 This is so great!



02/23/2011
Gemma: Video day! Nice to have a classmate who has the skills to put together a couple of videos for the website. Way to go Ji! [I'm going to try not to let my stress show on camera.] So much going on between tests, assignments and new event tasks popping up like the flyer that needed to be done yesterday.

i Here's the video link ignitemag.ca



02/24/2011
Gemma: "It's 11pm at my house. Josh and I just finished the flyer. High five! I'm proud of our collaborative effort. Okay *yawn* what's next?"



02/26/2011
Amy: A few days ago I set up a phone line in the CCRCC sales office for the event. Now I can't seem to access the messages from home. Grrr technology!



03/11/2011
Josh: It's Friday night, our event takes place in just over a month, and I still don't have the mailing labels to get invitations out. I need to find a diplomatic solution to get what I need.



03/14/2011
Gemma: Just had a tour through the CCRCC kitchen. It's tough greening an old venue, and at low cost—but I'm still optimistic.

03/14/2011
Josh: After running around in circles from the conference centre to the main campus, Geneva and I finally tracked down the mailing labels, plus 2000 envelopes and about 500 flyers. The whole class helped with stuffing the envelopes great teamwork. The rest of the flyers should come in a couple of days.

03/15/2011
Josh: I have been working relentlessly on sourcing audio equipment: Will the college provide it? What is needed from AV Canada? I have left several messages, hopefully I will hear back soon.

03/18/2011
Josh: We received more flyers today, but not all of them. Tina, Gemma and I were the only ones available to finish the job.

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The Board of Tourism Saskatoon is pleased to announce the recent addition of the following delegates to the 2011 CSAE National Conference and Showcase:

- Peter Cuthbert, Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
- John Hoyles, Canadian Bar Association
- Gary Hamilton, Western Retail Lumber Association

More than 250 CSAE delegates have already committed to attend the National Conference from September 15th to 17th. Don't miss keynote speaker Senator Pamela Wallin and motivational speaker Alvin Law. Register online at csae.com.

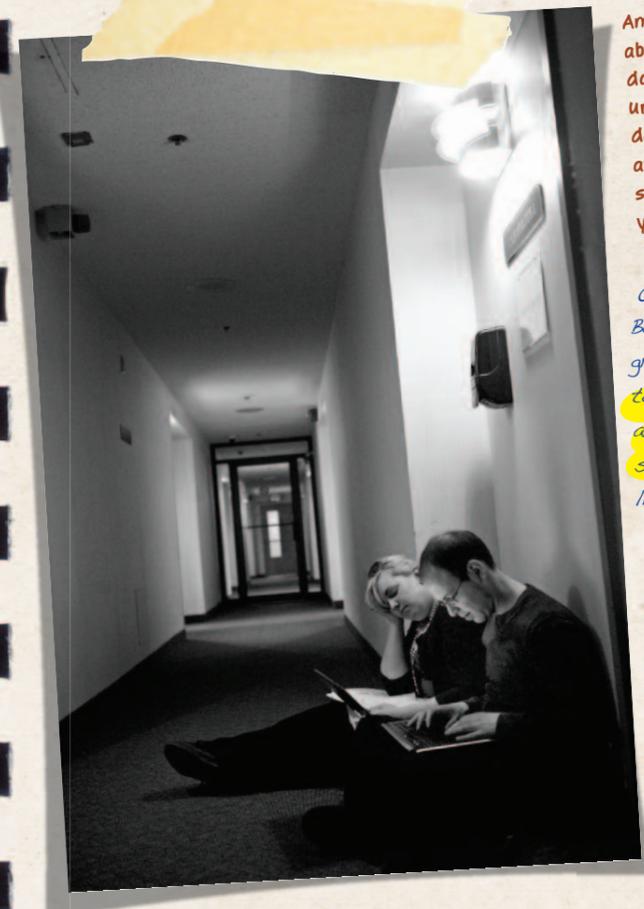
It's hard to keep a secret when everyone's talking about you.



branching out

03/22/2011
Gemma: Reviewing the critical path right now. Most things are on track, but we really need more people to register. Yikes. !

03/22/2011
Gemma: We're at the main campus right now making cold calls to hospitality alumni. It's our third cold calling session. Our ever-supportive instructor, Sandy, is urging us to "sell, sell, sell!" So far I've sold two tickets and I still have three more hours to go.



03/22/2011
Amy: Just heard from Gemma about the cold calling. What a day they had! I wish we understood earlier that our demographic required specific and timely notification. [Note: should be considered for next year's marketing plan.]

03/23/2011
Ber: Registration is looking grim. We need 85 registrants to take a reasonable loss and as of right now, we have seven. We're all getting a little nervous.

03/24/2011
Josh: Now, it's late. I just got back from seeing Guilty Pleasures, the band we've hired for our event. It turns out they can supply all of their own audio equipment. Now I don't have to worry about what I can get from the college, or what I need from AV Canada!

03/25/2011
Ber: I'm STUNNED. I just got an email from Sandy saying that our event has been postponed until next year because we didn't get enough registrations... How do I feel? I'm angry. We put so much work into this and we didn't get to see it unfold. I'm also sad. This event was our baby. Now we have to undo everything.

03/25/2011
Amy: I'll admit: I actually feel kind of relieved now that the event has been cancelled. Poor attendance has nothing to do with our integrity.



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branching out

03/25/2011

Josh: I woke up this morning to find out our event was being postponed until 2012, at which time the next post-grad class will take over. I called the band to let them know. They are pretty bummed as they cancelled a performance to play at our event. Personally, I'm feeling a bit relieved as I've been very overwhelmed with all of this.

03/30/2011

Josh: We still have to sort out what to do about the band. I suggested that if they can't find a gig for April 15 by next week, we should offer them half the money we would have paid them to perform at the event.

03/30/2011

Amy: Sounds weird but I'm looking forward to executing the steps involved in the undoing of our event—excited, even. I'm thankful that we have instructors like Sandy to guide us through the process. I don't consider this a failure; it's probably one of the best lessons I've learned all year.



04/06/2011

Josh: It was confirmed: we can pay the band half of their guarantee. On my end, the event is now undone.

04/20/2011

Bev: All the expenses we had to pay have been paid off. I'm done. At first, I felt like we were getting robbed of an opportunity to put on an event. But on second thought, I can see that the process itself was a great learning experience, and I feel privileged to have gone through it with my classmates.



04/20/2011

Gemma: The event binder with all our documentation is complete, and it will be a valuable resource for next year's class. Although we didn't get to see our event unfold, it still felt good to be part of something important, where our collective imagination and hard work came together.



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