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CuseMyCampus Business Plan

Brian Weinreich

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CuseMyCampus Business Plan

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renee Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

Brian Weinreich

Candidate for B.S. Degree and Renee Crown University Honors

September / 2010

Honors Capstone Project in Entrepreneurship

Capstone Project Advisor: _______________________

Neil Tarallo

Honors Reader: _______________________

Honors Director: _______________________

Date: _______________________

Abstract

Many students who arrive at Syracuse wish they knew more of the “inside scoop” in all aspects of the university. With the advent of Web 2.0, the Internet is now mainly dominated by social networking services. The formation and success of companies like Facebook, CollegeHumor, and Twitter show the extent to which students are connected constantly via the Internet throughout the day. One of the key problems with these large websites, such as Facebook and CollegeHumor, is the disconnect between the user and his community. These websites are successful on a large scale, but the niche small scale must be satisfied too. An aggregation of specific content, fostered to the acute topic of the university is a niche that has not been satisfied as of yet, but is in high demand.

CuseMyCampus is a business that relays interesting information to the Syracuse students by funneling out content based on student opinion. The audience becomes the content-creator. The business relies on a website to serve as the medium for displaying important information to the Syracuse students.

CuseMyCampus currently operates as a LLC business based out of New York. The company was founded in February 2010 originally as a satire website for Syracuse, displaying humorous news, articles, pictures, and videos. However, as the membership increased, so did the content for the website. The website will be revamped this summer, and will open up to a greater variety of content.

The Academics page serves two purposes. Students will be able to review and read about classes and professors. Secondly, the page will serve as a virtual marketplace for textbook exchange. The Housing page will allow students to view apartments both on- and off-campus before actually deciding to live there. Landlords will be able to post their available apartments. A collection of photos, and past tenant comments will aid in the process of selection. Students will able to see what events are occurring every night and during the weekends, be it bar specials, community events, parties, and concerts. The Market page will have two purposes. First, it will allow student entrepreneurs to gain traction for their businesses by listing their product or idea and engaging with the large CuseMyCampus community. Secondly, students can post items they are trying to sell to one another within the university community. The Review page will overlap with many other pages, but will serve as a central source for students to get their fellow students’ opinions on events, restaurants, bars, museums, classes, teachers, and housing. The Humor page consists of student-generated content in the form of various media. Students can share news, pictures, or videos they have created for class and around campus.

Most of the marketing will be done virally, as the website is easily shared through Facebook, Twitter, Digg, Tumblr, Myspace, and other popular social media sites. CuseMyCampus aggressively markets to freshman, by sending out flyers, posting on freshman Facebook groups, and being in constant contact with Syracuse students.

By being the pioneers on campus where the student has a voice in hot topics CuseMyCampus continually blazes into a new frontier.
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I would like to thank a few special people who have truly helped me throughout this project, and the expansion of my business.

John Liddy

John Liddy was the honest mentor that CuseMyCampus truly needed. John was willing to give me sincere advice for the strategic growth of my business as well as provide excellent connections to local entrepreneurs, accountants, and lawyers.

Neil Tarallo

Neil Tarallo was immensely helpful with overseeing the academic side of CuseMyCampus. Through Neil, I learned the importance of creating a business plan and the subsequent utility for each and every section of the plan in future progress.

Eric Holzwarth

Eric Holzwarth has been the wonderful watchful eye over my Capstone project. I truly appreciated the patience Eric gave me as I weaved in and out of various dilemmas throughout the course of my project.

Mom and Dad

Last, but not least, I would like to thank my parents; they have been a great driving force for the success of both my project and my business. Mom, you have given me a strong will to succeed as well as great moral and emotional support when times are tough. Dad, you have always looked out for me and have given me a great deal of excellent ideas for creating a thriving business. I truly appreciate your faith in me, and my choice to do something risky (start my own business) straight out of college.
Executive Summary

Opportunity Statement

Many students who arrive at Syracuse wish they knew more of the “inside scoop” in all aspects of the university. With the advent of Web 2.0, and two thirds of the world’s Internet population now visiting a social network or blog site weekly\(^1\), the Internet is now mainly dominated by social networking services\(^2\). The formation and success of companies like Facebook, CollegeHumor, and Twitter show the extent to which students are connected constantly via the Internet throughout the day; over 85% of college students use Facebook.\(^3\) These websites are successfully growing on a large scale, but much like the recent trend of cable networks switching to more niche areas\(^4\), CuseMyCampus will move to cater a more specialized audience. By combining satirical news with social


networking, CuseMyCampus sets the stage for a new niche of satirical-news embedded through collegiate social networking.

According to David Armano, of the Harvard Business Review, social media is beginning to look less social and “more exclusive,” with users wanting to filter out the “hyperactive updates” and only obtain information relevant to their social circle. CuseMyCampus solves this dilemma by offering an aggregation of specific content, fostered to the acute topic of only the university and its students.

**Business concept**

CuseMyCampus is a business that relays interesting information to the Syracuse students by funneling out content based on student opinion. The audience becomes the content-creator. CuseMyCampus topics are relevant to the users, and are based around a proven model illustrated by magazines and other blogs: writing topical articles that “push” various things throughout the website and those of advertisers. For example, during the peak real estate renting months,

---


CuseMyCampus runs articles surrounding the ability to easily find available houses/apartments through their own housing website. CuseMyCampus relies on a website to serve as the medium for displaying the following topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academics</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Nightlife</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Reviews</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Pictures</th>
<th>Videos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students reviews on classes</td>
<td>View apartments both on- and off-campus</td>
<td>Bar specials, community events, parties, and concerts</td>
<td>Student entrepreneurs gain traction for their businesses</td>
<td>Events, restaurants, bars, dining halls, classes, teachers, and housing</td>
<td>Student generated media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook exchange</th>
<th>Landlords post available apartments</th>
<th>Students can exchange / sell to one another</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of photos and past tenant comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Academics**: The Academics page serves two purposes. First, for students to review and read about classes they might take, or have taken. Secondly, as a medium for textbook exchange.

- **Housing**: The Housing page will allow students to view apartments both on- and off-campus before actually deciding to live there. Landlords will be able to post their available apartments. A collection of photos, and past tenant comments will aid in the process of selection.
• **Nightlife**: Students will be able to see what events are occurring every night and during the weekends, be it bar specials, community events, parties, and concerts.

• **Market**: The Market page will have two purposes. First, it will allow student entrepreneurs to gain traction for their businesses by listing their product or idea and engaging with the large CuseMyCampus community. Secondly, students can post items they are trying to sell to one another within the university community.

• **Reviews**: This page will overlap with many other pages, but will serve as a central source for students to get their fellow students’ opinions on events, restaurants, bars, dining halls, classes, teachers, and housing.

• **News, Articles, Pictures, and Videos**: This page consists of student-generated content in the form of various media. Students can share news, pictures, or videos they have created for class and around campus.

**Competitive Advantage**

CuseMyCampus has the first-mover advantage into this “white space” within the social networking society. With in-house technical skills in website design, a strong connection to the student body, and the devotion for student reviewed content, CuseMyCampus will constantly be up-to-date and trendy; something that the official Syracuse website cannot afford to do. CuseMyCampus will compete with The Onion, The Daily Orange, Jerk Magazine, Facebook.com,

The Onion is a competitor for the satirical news portion. However, The Onion operates on a national level, and does not tackle university content. Another competitor is Syracuse.com, which has a similar goal, but a different target market: the city rather than the university. CuseMyCampus will compete with Jerk Magazine in online viewership, especially within the satirical forte. Also claiming to be a “classifieds” website with users buying and selling items, CuseMyCampus will compete with eBay and Craigslist. The Daily Orange is a crucial competitor for Syracuse University news; however, CuseMyCampus has the added benefit of being satirical as well as open source generated. One key advantage is allowing students to decide what is important to them, and guiding CuseMyCampus to follow.

**Description of Target Market**

**Students**

According to NESCO, the US has the second largest number of higher education institutions in the world, with a total of 5,758 college and universities, with an average of more than 115 per state[^7]. The U.S. Department of Education totaled 18,248,128 students in 2007[^8]. The average college student spends 10 hours

or more per week surfing the Internet. Moreover, 24% of these students participate in online bulletin boards, groups, chats, and 22% write on blogs. Syracuse University has 13,736 undergraduate students, 5,682 graduate students, and 1,489 faculty, while SUNY-ESF currently has 1,094 students enrolled, yielding more than 22,000 people in the Syracuse community. With more than 10,000 page views a day, and 7,684 unique visitors from the Syracuse area, CuseMyCampus has already captured 34.92% of the Syracuse market hovering 10.92% above the national average for students who participate in online bulletin boards, groups, chats, and blogs - 24%.

CuseMyCampus will stratify students into three segments

- Freshmen
- Sophomores & Juniors
- Seniors & Alumni

This will allow CuseMyCampus to market advertisers and landlords differently and more effectively to each of the three segments.

By January of 2011, CuseMyCampus will bring the website to two more universities that have a large need for online housing as well as satirical university news. These two will be Cornell University and Marist College. Cornell University has 20,633 students, while Marist College has 5,054 students.

In accordance with the 24% national average for students who visit blogs, bulletin boards, groups, and chats, CuseMyCampus has a market of 4,591 students at Cornell University and 1,213 students at Marist College.

---

Landlords

There are 40+ landlords in the Syracuse area with ~1400 houses / apartments to rent, and ~350 listings on pre-existing housing websites\(^\text{10}\). Syracuse University students primarily use Orangehousing.com to search for off-campus housing options. There are 35+ landlords by Cornell University with ~1300 houses / apartments, and ~320 listings on pre-existing housing websites\(^\text{11}\). Cornell University students use the Cornell University Office of the Dean of Students OCHO website to search for off-campus housing options. Marist College has 65+ landlords with ~125 houses / apartments, and there is no housing website in establishment.

Advertisers

There are two types of advertisers for CuseMyCampus: local and national. Local advertisers are shop owners, restaurants and bar owners, as well as other businesses that surround the university, looking for an increase in exposure to the students. There are approximately 434 restaurants, 195 bars, and 1000+ other businesses within a 10-15 mile radius of Syracuse University\(^\text{12}\). Cornell University has 248 restaurants, 124 bars, and 1000+ other businesses within a 10-15 miles radius of the campus. Marist College has 404 restaurants, 77 bars, and 1000+ other businesses around the campus.

Some local advertisers that have been approached include:


Advertising networks such as ADSDAQ, Google Adsense, and BannerConnect select national advertisers. These companies generally run advertisements for large companies such as:

- Verizon
- Amazon
- Vonage
- Continental Airlines

## Total Market Potential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Landlords</th>
<th>Advertisers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse University</td>
<td>22,001</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td>20,633</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marist College</td>
<td>5,054</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## The Team

**Brian Weinreich** – CEO & CTO
The CEO is responsible for managing the entire company as well as strategically overseeing the expansion of the company throughout the nation.

The CTO is responsible for maintaining the website up-to-date and ensuring functionality and consistency throughout all online presences: Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc…

**Alex Piliouras – COO & CFO**

The COO is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company. Working directly with the writers as well as sales executives for each campus, the COO will ensure quality content and sales are being conducted. The COO is also responsible for effective, efficient business to be enacted throughout all campuses as the company expands.

The CFO is responsible for keeping accurate records of all expenses and revenue generated by the business. The CFO will maintain accounting records, and submit tax forms as needed.

**Writers –**

The writers for each campus are responsible for publishing one article per week on their designated day. Their content must be comical and relevant to the college crowd.

**Sales Executive –**

The sales executive at each campus is responsible for finding and maintaining 12 advertisements per month on the website. The sales executive must have the following months 12 advertisements ready to be launched by the third week of the current month.
Economics and Financial Highlights

CuseMyCampus has two distinct revenue streams totaling $121,200 annually from all three campuses. The largest will be revenue generated from the sale of a realty listing.

Much like online classifieds, CuseMyCampus will charge a flat $10 fee per month for each realty listing. At Syracuse, CuseMyCampus will sell 300 listings every month, generating $3,000 per month and $36,000 annually. At Cornell University, CuseMyCampus will sell 320 listings every month, generating $3,200 per month and $38,400 annually. At Marist College, CuseMyCampus will sell 30 listings every month, generating $300 per month and $3,600 annually. CuseMyCampus will generate $78,000 annually from realty listings.

Advertisements on the website run at $100 per month. There are four different locations on the website that rotate through three different advertisements, effectively yielding twelve different advertisements for every page. CuseMyCampus will sell twelve advertisements every month, generating $1,200 per month and $14,400 annually. The revenue drawn from all advertisements on the three websites will yield $43,200 annually.

CuseMyCampus has a number of expenses totaling $23,446.

CuseMyCampus hosting costs $6/month, with a $10 annual domain renewal fee. This amounts to $82 annually per campus, and $246 for all three campuses. Each campus will have five writers, one sales executive, and one regional manager.
Writers will be paid $10/week for 1 article during the academic year. This amounts to $1,600 per campus annually, and $4,800 for all three campuses annually.

The sales executive will be paid on commission-based sales taking a 20% cut of all advertisement sales. As a part-time job, the sales executive will sell $1,200 worth of advertisements per month, accruing $240 monthly, and $1,920 annually; all three campus sales executives will be paid $5,760 annually.

The regional manager at each school will earn $20 per week, and $640 annually. This amounts to a cost of $1,920 annually for all three campuses.

The CEO and COO will earn a salary of $500/month, totaling to $12,000 annually.

The Industry

The News Industry
This business will operate in the Internet News Publishers Industry, NAICS 516110\textsuperscript{13}.

News And Satire
News websites have grown in viewership by an average of 11% year over year, since 2004\textsuperscript{14}. News websites like CNN, MSNBC, and FOX have


dominated the top 100 most trafficked websites, according to Alexa\textsuperscript{15}. These websites have held their position for 10+ years, showing the dominance of news on the Internet.

Online satirical news is one of the quickest growing fields on the Internet; The Onion in 2008 was the 6,000\textsuperscript{th} highest trafficked site on Alexa, and in just two years it moved up to 1,800\textsuperscript{th} most trafficked site on the Internet. The Daily Show with Jon Stewart has moved from around 4,000 in 2008 to ~2,000 in 2010, while Fark.com has gone from 10,000 in 2008 to ~2,000 in 2010. Moreover, the population at large is better rehearsed in news when learned from a satirical source, rather than a standard news network\textsuperscript{16}.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
Rank & Site & Unique Audience & YOY Change \\
\hline
1 & MSNBC Digital Network & 39,900,000 & 9\% \\
2 & CNN Digital Network & 38,724,000 & 4\% \\
3 & Yahoo! News & 37,902,000 & 16\% \\
4 & AOL News & 23,604,000 & 1\% \\
5 & NYTimes.com & 20,118,000 & 7\% \\
6 & Fox News Digital Network & 16,791,000 & 48\% \\
7 & Tribune Newspapers & 16,513,000 & 16\% \\
8 & Google News & 13,668,000 & 18\% \\
9 & McClatchy Newspaper Network & 12,508,000 & 20\% \\
10 & ABCNEWS Digital Network & 12,189,000 & 4\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}


History of Social Media

According to the Nielsen Net Ratings\textsuperscript{17}, the top 10 social networking sites collectively grew 47 percent year over year increasing from 46.8 million to 68.8 million in April 2006, reaching 45% of active web users.

Facebook, founded only 6 years ago, now has more than 400 million active members, and the average user spends more than 55 minutes per day on the site (Facebook, 2010). These statistics show how tightly drawn to the web our nation has become. Other sites such as Myspace, have a 367% YOY Growth (Nielsen Ratings, 2006) and continue to grow with more and more loyal users.

**Technology**
As technology continues to infiltrate our lives through new portable devices like the iPad or cellphones that can easily access the Internet, we become a society of constant connection. There has been a decentralization of power within the Internet, and users want to live within their own niche that they create. Users “want experts at the helm and a community of equally passionate people they can interact with.”

A typical college student is connected to his university community through Facebook and Twitter, obtaining only the content relevant to him. As the niches get smaller and smaller, users ask for more specific content in real-time. CuseMyCampus will play on this constant connection and need for up-to-date information by allowing itself to be completely user generated and accessible from every medium that can access the Internet.

The current CuseMyCampus website, one that serves satirical content, measures up well against other websites serving humor as their primary subject matter. (Google Analytics, 2010).

**Porters Five Forces**

**Supplier Power**
- Moderate supplier power
- Growing volume of users leads to highly valuable advertisement space
- Sole producer of online Syracuse humorous news
- Low cost of changing services for end-user

**Threat of New Entry**
- Extremely time consuming aggregation and organization of data for academic ratings, calendar events, and realty listings
- High level of brand equity associated with humor on campus
- High customer loyalty
- Multiple years of existence
- Proprietary collective database of media
- Self-propelled free advertising by students through various social media outlets

**Competitive Rivalry**
- High competitive rivalry for attracting students and displaying advertisements
- Both offline and online competition for media dispersal
- Advertisers seek most highly viewed publications

**Buyer Power**
- Students have high buying power
- Landlords and advertisers have low buying power

**Threat of Substitution**
- Moderate difficulty for replication; extremely large organized database
- Low difficulty for substitution; Simplicity of website creation leads to multiple humorous websites delivering useful information
The Company, Concept, and Product

Company and Concept

CuseMyCampus is registered as CuseMyCampus LLC in New York State. The company was founded in February 2010 originally as a satire website for Syracuse, displaying news, articles, pictures, and videos. However, as the membership increased, so did the content for the website. The website was revamped in June 2010 and now consists of the previously mentioned facets, while gaining a few more core components.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Content 2009-2010</th>
<th>Current Content 2010-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures</td>
<td>Pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>Videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics</td>
<td>Academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nightlife</td>
<td>Nightlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>Market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews</td>
<td>Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Services

Academics: One of the most important decisions a student will make in his college career is his choice of classes. In the past, many students have relied on word-of-mouth from peers as well as the requirements set forth by the varying programs. However, with the knowledge of thousands of students, each individually rating the classes and their professors, the student no longer has to second-guess his choices. Both finding out the reading requirements for a class, as
well as discovering which professors administer exams versus essays, the students will be able to make their perfect schedule of classes.

**Housing:** The Housing page will have two sections for students: on-campus and off-campus housing. Both of these sections will allow students to view the rooms of their apartments or dorm rooms, rate them, comment on them, and share pictures of their own rooms. Furthermore, in the off-campus section, the student will be shown a Google Map with housing options. Students can narrow down their choices easily, and quickly glance at the map to see the exact location of their future residence.

Landlords will be able to post their available apartments on the off-campus section for a rate of $10/month, per listing.

**Calendar:** Students constantly want to engage with one-another outside of the time they spend in class. However, finding out about community events, parties, bar specials, and concerts is tricky, as one has to navigate various websites to find this specific information. Also, some students simply do not know where to look for this information, and therefore many events elude them. Due to the growing
popularity of CuseMyCampus, these events will be highly attended and promoted. The calendar will be run by CuseMyCampus staff as well as user generated.

**Market:** The Market page will allow student entrepreneurs to gain traction for their businesses by fusing their product or idea with the website. These students can create a page within the website to engage the large CuseMyCampus community as well as advertise their product locally. They Marketplace will also allow students a medium for selling, exchanging, and buying goods from one another. CuseMyCampus has made the distinct decision to offer this as a free service in contrast to premium services such as eBay.

**Reviews:** This page will overlap with many other pages, but will serve as a central source for students to get their fellow students’ opinions on Syracuse university external sources. Students can submit and read reviews regarding events, restaurants, bars, local establishments, classes, teachers, and housing. This year University Union brought in Drake and several other artists for Block Party. Because newspapers are a limited resource, the staff of the Daily Orange is the sole voice in the review. Whereas, on CuseMyCampus, multiple students represent the voice of Syracuse, allowing for a greater variety of reviews.

**News, Articles, Pictures, and Videos:** This page consists of student-generated content in the form of various media, mainly with a satirical edge. This has allowed CuseMyCampus to open up a novel forum for humorous discussion of
real topics students care about. CuseMyCampus continually blazes into a new frontier by being the pioneers of fresh content.

Although the ability to mimic CuseMyCampus model is quite easy, competitors will have difficulty due to the increasing popularity, solidarity in establishment, and previously accumulated data. CuseMyCampus has the first-mover advantage.

The CuseMyCampus Website Shown Graphically

Of the 440 pages on CuseMyCampus, 66 pages have been created by CuseMyCampus employees, while user submissions have generated 374 dynamic pages for the website.\(^{19}\)

- **blue**: links
- **red**: tables
- **green**: DIV tags
- **violet**: images
- **yellow**: forms
- **orange**: linebreaks / blockquotes
- **black**: HTML tag (root node)
- **gray**: all other tags

Users have generated 85% of the content on CuseMyCampus without incentive.


## Competition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Viewers*20</th>
<th>Advertisement cost (per month)</th>
<th>Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily Orange</strong></td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>Syracuse students, alumni, families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syracuse.com</strong></td>
<td>550,000</td>
<td>Free / $15</td>
<td>Syracuse residents, Syracuse students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jerk Magazine</strong></td>
<td>579</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>Syracuse students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craigslist</strong></td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syr.edu</strong></td>
<td>305,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Syracuse students, alumni, faculty, staff, residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CollegeHumor</strong></td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>Not Listed</td>
<td>Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facebook</strong></td>
<td>400,000,000</td>
<td>Variable cost per click</td>
<td>Global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orangehousing</strong></td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Data is represented as online Unique Visitors

CuseMyCampus will compete with various other college student-oriented sites. Although the number of college student-oriented websites is exceedingly large, the major players for the attention of Syracuse University students are listed above.

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The Daily Orange is a student-run news outlet for Syracuse students. The DO represents the largest media producer, and with its large targeted viewership, it stands as presumably the best outlet for advertisers. The DO exists in both online and offline form.

Syracuse.com is a website that covers the city of Syracuse. The website focuses on issues regarding the city rather than the University.

Jerk Magazine is a monthly magazine affiliated with SU that features funny articles and pictures as created by the staff. Jerk exists in both offline and online form.

Craigslist is a national website for exchanging goods and services. Both a free and easy to use service, Craigslist aids students in selling their used materials between one another. However, there is no filter to view only posts by students.

Syracuse.edu is the educational website for Syracuse University. This website relays current events at Syracuse, as well as all other useful academic information. Although extremely thorough and large, the website only featured moderated content and not that of student opinion.

CollegeHumor is a national website that features funny articles, pictures, and videos submitted by college students.

Facebook is a social networking site that dominates most of the time students spend on the Internet.
Orangehousing is a website that allows landlords to list properties, as well as students to view and contact regarding available units.

Market Research and Analysis

Customers

There are two types of customers for CuseMyCampus: advertisers and landlords. Advertisers will display their advertisements on CuseMyCampus while landlords will list available houses on the Off-Campus Housing page. Advertisers spent an estimated $1.2 billion in 2008 to place ads on social networking sites with that number predicted to rise to $1.4 billion by 2011.21

CuseMyCampus has reached out to 10 local landlords regarding their opinions on their current online presence.

- 4 out of 10 agreed that Orangehousing.com was not sufficient for their needs.
- 2 out of 10 knew about CuseMyCampus.com
- 8 out of 10 were willing to list their houses on CuseMyCampus.com
- 9 out of 10 had used the Daily Orange to reach students
- 4 out of 10 had used Craigslist.com to reach students

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• 10 out of 10 would like to use a free-listing website

• 10 out of 10 said they would use a paid listing website if they knew that it would effectively capture 80% of off-campus students

The advertisers are:

• Local businesses

• Businesses that want to attract college-aged students

• National corporations

• Student entrepreneurs

Some current/interested Syracuse advertisers include:

• The Student Storage Company

• Empire Brewing Company

• Blue Tusk & Grill

• DreamFetcher

• Freedom of Espresso

• Google Adsense

• AdsDaq

The landlords are:

• Landlords serving student housing

Some current/interested landlords at Syracuse include:

• Campus Hill Apartments

• O.P.R.
University Area

Market Size and Potential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Landlords</th>
<th>Advertisers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Syracuse University</strong></td>
<td>22,001</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cornell University</strong></td>
<td>20,633</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marist College</strong></td>
<td>5,054</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2,481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With a size of 22,000 people, the Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF community spends over $3,000,000 on goods and services every week. These goods and services are not localized solely to Syracuse University; 93% of consumers travel to areas around the university such as Armory Square, Carousel Mall, and Wescott Street. Common purchases include: alcohol, bars and nightlife, coffee, groceries, restaurants, books, music, movies, clothing, gas, toiletries, and school supplies.

The families of Syracuse students have an average household income of $84,000, while staff and faculty earn an average of $63,000 per year. Syracuse University also boasts an alumni network the size of 235,000 people from 50 states and 153 countries.

The rapid growth of CuseMyCampus is possible due to the haste associated with spreading content through social networking websites. Because

---

the website is so heavily embedded with “Share on Facebook” and “Post to Twitter” or “Share on Digg” buttons, more than 25% of CuseMyCampus content is shared by 20 or more people on these networking sites. There is a vital snowball effect seen: the more users that share CuseMyCampus content on networking sites, the more new users that discover and become fans of CuseMyCampus.

Cornell University has 20,633 students, while Marist College has 5,054 students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Syracuse University</th>
<th>Cornell University</th>
<th>Marist College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students Enrolled</td>
<td>13,736</td>
<td>20,633</td>
<td>5,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24% of Students</td>
<td>3,296</td>
<td>4,951</td>
<td>1,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(National Average)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35% of Students</td>
<td>4,807</td>
<td>7,221</td>
<td>1,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CuseMyCampus Average)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current users of CuseMyCampus are (Facebook Insights Statistics, 2010):

- 91% between the ages of 18-24 years old
- 9% between the ages of 13-17, and 25+
- 65% Female / 34% Male
- 95% from the United States / 2% from Spain / 2% from England
- Of those that live in the United States:
  - 48% live in Syracuse / 52% live in New York City
- 98% speak English / 1% speak Spanish
- 93% attend college, 5% attend high school

43,049 visits came from 60 countries/territories

(Google Analytics, May 2010).

**Customer Growth Rate**

Since the inception of CuseMyCampus, the number of CuseMyCampus customers has grown explosively. Within the first two months, the website attracted over 300,000 views, and has over 750 dedicated fans (Google Analytics, 2010).

CuseMyCampus continues to gain 10-15 new fans each week\(^{23}\). The website, as of June 17\(^{th}\) 2010, has 12,789 (73%) of its unique visitors who have trafficked the website 51+ times (Google Analytics, 2010).

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CuseMyCampus loyal visitors (9+ times per month) have grown month to month, from launch in February to April 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count of visits from this visitor including current</th>
<th>Visits that were the visitor’s nth visit</th>
<th>Percentage of all visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 times</td>
<td>16,637.00</td>
<td>29.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 times</td>
<td>4,611.00</td>
<td>8.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 times</td>
<td>2,631.00</td>
<td>4.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 times</td>
<td>1,831.00</td>
<td>3.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 times</td>
<td>1,429.00</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 times</td>
<td>1,180.00</td>
<td>2.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 times</td>
<td>1,005.00</td>
<td>1.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 times</td>
<td>804.00</td>
<td>1.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-14 times</td>
<td>3,834.00</td>
<td>6.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-25 times</td>
<td>4,306.00</td>
<td>7.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50 times</td>
<td>5,127.00</td>
<td>9.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-100 times</td>
<td>4,041.00</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200 times</td>
<td>3,822.00</td>
<td>6.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201+ times</td>
<td>3,757.00</td>
<td>6.74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Groups and Online Surveys
CuseMyCampus has sponsored two focus groups on campus to concentrate on how to expand CuseMyCampus and what makes a website addictive. The following were the most frequent responses:

- “I want a website without university censorship.”
- “Some kind of website that has everything the student handbook won’t tell you.”
- “It has to engage people from all over campus and bring them together. I want to know when other people are online and I can talk to them.”
- “I like websites that are easy to navigate and I can find stuff that I need quickly.”
- “More humor and less boring news.”

CuseMyCampus ran an online poll on the website to see what the actual users wanted from the website. There were 154 participants and the results are shown below. This data is most important, as it comes from dedicated users of the site, rather than a sample without prior knowledge of CuseMyCampus. Accordingly, the results show a sharp peak for the interests of Academics and Nightlife.
Marketing

Overall Marketing Strategy
CuseMyCampus marketing is trendy, hip, and comical. From the humorous self-promotional videos, to the college star athletes who endorse it, CuseMyCampus marketing differentiates itself from others by appealing to college students on multiple levels. Many website businesses give off a “corporate” vibe, making the user feel disconnected from the creators and the community. CuseMyCampus is a space where users feel at home and free to voice their opinion. The game plan of CuseMyCampus changes along with its community, continually adding and removing content that its users want to see.
**Market Segmentation**

The CuseMyCampus market can be segmented into three categories defined by class.

1. **Freshmen** – Freshmen are an extremely valuable market segment for advertisers. Advertisers who establish a good reputation with freshmen will ensure long-term profits from their recurring business over the next four years. Freshmen come to Syracuse with a blank slate, and are told what is cool, what they should buy, where they should go; CuseMyCampus aids in this transition process. Many articles, pictures, and videos will be geared to showing freshmen various new aspects of Syracuse University, including guides, how-to’s, and other interactive information for new students.

2. **Sophomores & Juniors** – Landlords will find this market segment particularly valuable. Many students do not know both where to look for housing as well as when they should start looking for housing. CuseMyCampus serves as a friendly reminder through integrated media, in order to push students toward renting houses and apartments. Articles, pictures, and videos will be tailored toward pushing students towards the housing page at peak sales periods of the year. Advertisers will find this market segment valuable as well, as many sophomore and juniors are able to have cars; allowing students to travel to places off campus.
3. **Seniors & Alumni** – Seniors and alumni are valuable to advertisers.

By engraining a positive brand image in the students’ minds, advertisers can ensure long-term patronage from returning alumni as well as product recognition for national brands.

**Breakdown of Users by Sex and Age**
CuseMyCampus is dominated by female viewers with a 3:2 ratio of female to male registered users. These statistics will aid in helping advertisers gauge the type of advertisements to display on the website.

![Chart showing breakdown of users by sex and age](chart.png)

**Viral Content**
Sharing the website content virally through social networking websites has allowed CuseMyCampus to grow and reach its target market. Facebook is the top referral to CuseMyCampus, beating direct traffic by 7%. This is a clear example of the strength in sharing content throughout the Internet.
85% of college students currently have a membership on Facebook\textsuperscript{24}. Therefore, by growing the community on Facebook and moving them to the website, CuseMyCampus can easily reach its target market.

\textbf{Growth Percentages, Market Size, Market share}

The Online News Industry has grown by 11\% year over year, since 2006\textsuperscript{25}. CuseMyCampus has grown in registered users by 85\% month to month for the past 7 months\textsuperscript{26}.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Sources} & \textbf{Visits} & \textbf{\% visits} \\
\hline
facebook.com (referral) & 17,880 & 44.08\% \\
(direct) ((none)) & 15,025 & 37.04\% \\
google (organic) & 2,820 & 6.95\% \\
twitter.com (referral) & 1,684 & 4.15\% \\
nunesmagician.com (referral) & 1,572 & 3.88\% \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\begin{flushright}
(Google Analytics, 2010).
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
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\begin{flushright}
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\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
Marketing for Landlords & Advertisers

The website itself serves as a viable marketing tool to grab the attention of landlords and advertisers.

Approaching Landlords

Landlords in the surrounding area will be met with in person, where Brian Weinreich and Alex Piliouras will demonstrate the key areas in which CuseMyCampus surpasses the competition: ease of use, and large viewership.

CuseMyCampus is extremely effective for landlords, as it reaches out to thousands of eager students letting them know “now is the time to start looking for housing – check the housing page for listings.” Instead of relying on advertisements to get students over to the housing page, CuseMyCampus uses the craft of threading relevant information regarding realty listings into popular articles, pictures, and videos.

34% of CuseMyCampus users are sophomores and juniors. This equates to roughly 1,600 students that CuseMyCampus can guarantee to reach, based off the websites current market capture.

Landlords using the service will be given a set of login credentials for the website. These credentials will allow the landlord to list available houses and apartments, attach pictures, and easily pay per listing on the secure PayPal website or through check.

The Statistics

47 Landlords in Syracuse area
Approaching Advertisers

CuseMyCampus sent out a blanket set of letters to all businesses in the surrounding Syracuse community informing them about CuseMyCampus and potential advertisement opportunities. CuseMyCampus currently is running advertisements from The Student Storage Company, Google, and BannerConnect. CuseMyCampus is always open for local businesses to start advertising campaigns in the following year. If the owners do not have their own internet-friendly advertisement, CuseMyCampus will work one-on-one with local owners to develop and implement a Flash based banner.

Advertisers can reach students ranging from freshmen to senior year. This equates to ~4000 students, based off the websites current market capture.

Pricing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly Rates</th>
<th>Monthly Rates</th>
<th>Yearly Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Advertisement</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 House / Apartment Listing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advertisements

Website advertisements run at $10/week, and there are three positions per page for an advertisement to run. In addition, the website cycles through ten different advertisements at one position on the page. This plan allows CuseMyCampus to reach a maximum of $15,600/year at each university in online advertising.
House Listings

The cost for a landlord to post a single listing for an apartment or house is $10/month. There are over 300+ houses and apartments to be rented by students in the Syracuse area. However, there are peak listing months as well as off-peak listing months. In the peak listing months, February through May, the website will garner $1,500/month in listings for an average of 300 listings/month. In the off-peak listing months June through January, CuseMyCampus will garner $500/month in listings for an average of 100 listings/month. Therefore, CuseMyCampus will accumulate $10,000 of income per year from house listings.

This pricing structure will directly compete with OrangeHousing, which offers a $10/month listing fee and a $20/month featured listing fee.

One of the key areas in which OrangeHousing fails is usability. From a poll of 100 students on the CuseMyCampus website, 73 knew of OrangeHousing and 54 of those students was dissatisfied with the OrangeHousing website. By providing a better product, with competitive pricing, students and landlords will gravitate quickly toward CuseMyCampus.

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Advertising and Sales Promotions
The users themselves will be the main source of advertising for CuseMyCampus. The most effective type of advertising and promotion CuseMyCampus can get is from students talking to one another about the great content they saw on the website. As students draw up the hype both on and offline, CuseMyCampus will reap in the benefits of the trendy popularity.

Facebook Ads run on a cost per click basis. CuseMyCampus has run two ad campaigns on Facebook, yielding a .15% click-through rate. The average cost per click was 33 cents. After 157 clicks, CuseMyCampus spent $52.30, while also having 104,731 impressions on members’ pages.

(Facebook Advertisements, 2010).
These statistics show how ineffective Facebook advertisements are in relation to the free “advertising” members provide by sharing CuseMyCampus content on their pages. 44% of CuseMyCampus traffic is directed from Facebook member profiles that share links to the CuseMyCampus website, yielding over 17,000 visits to the website in the span of two months.

What Students Say
"This is officially my new favourite distraction" – Emily Fitzpatrick, Class of 2010

"The new alternative to Facebook stalking" – JuiceBox, 2010
"This is pretty much the best site on the web" – Zackary Smith, Class of 2010
“I LOVE CuseMyCampus” – JuiceBox, 2010

The Economics of the Business

Revenue Drivers and Profit Margins
The main revenue for CuseMyCampus comes from two sources: advertisements and real estate listings.

Website Advertisements
Website advertisements run at $100/month, and there are 4 positions per page for an advertisement to run. In addition, the website cycles through 3 different advertisements at each position on the page. This allows CuseMyCampus to obtain $1,200 per month from advertisements.

By January 2011, CuseMyCampus will be expanded to Marist College and Cornell University. This will net an additional $1,200 per campus for advertisements, yielding a net total of $3,600 per month.

Rates for advertisements are subject to change based on the dynamic volume of views and growth the website receives. Advertisements rates will be calculated using CPM. The average CPM (cost per thousand) for a website greatly varies through various advertising networks, however CuseMyCampus receives an average of $1.08 for every thousand page views. This method causes rates to become inflated when there is growth in viewership.
**Real Estate Listings**

The cost to post a single listing for an apartment or house is $10/month. There are over 300+ houses and apartments to be rented by students in the Syracuse area. Cornell University has a 1300+ houses/apartments available to be rented. Assuming the same "availability to classifieds listings" ratio as Syracuse University (1:4), Cornell University will yield 325 realty listings per month. Marist College has a 125+ houses/apartments available to be rented, yielding 31 realty listings per month.

**Fixed and Variable Costs**

**Fixed Costs**

- **Labor**
  - Each CEO pays himself for 40 hours/week of work
    - Salary of $12.50/hour
  - The COO pays himself for 40 hours/week of work
    - Salary of $12.50/hour
  - The writers will be paid for 1 hour/week of work
    - Salary of $10.00/hour

- **Business Cards**
  - $50/year

- **Rent**
  - $500/month

- **Utilities/phone**

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Variable Costs

- Website Hosting
  - $6/month per campus

- Advertising
  - $100/month per campus

- The Marketing / Sales Executive will be paid based on commission
  - 20% cut of revenue received from advertisement sale

Operating Leverage
CuseMyCampus will have a moderately high operating leverage due to the high fixed costs associated with the nature of its business. The high operating leverage means there is a large risk associated with the company initially; therefore CuseMyCampus will have to continue to meet sales targets in order to maintain its profitability in the beginning. This poses as a risk for CuseMyCampus because the fixed costs of salaries relies upon a constant revenue source accumulated from advertisers and real estate listings.

Profit Margins
Profit margins are extremely high, as there is little to no cost in producing a virtual good. Real estate listings are performed by the landlords via the website, and the transaction takes place through PayPal. Advertisements require the CuseMyCampus website administrator to encode the image on the page, a small expense in comparison to the revenue received.
**Revenue Sources**
There are two main sources of revenue for CuseMyCampus: real estate listings and advertisements. However, through affiliate marketing and various other sales tactics, CuseMyCampus can obtain other sources of revenue in the future – yielding semi-flexible revenue sources.

**Volumes**
There are few spaces for advertisements to run on the website, and there are only a moderate number of houses and apartments available for rent each month. Due to the ceiling cap on advertisements and real estate listings, volumes will be low.

**Overall Economic Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Margins</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue Sources</th>
<th>Operating Leverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Flexible</td>
<td>Moderate - High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Revenue Sources and Profit Durability**

CuseMyCampus revenue sources are **not flexible**. The business relies highly on advertisements from advertisers and landlords posting available houses and apartments. Landlords are targeting college students living off-campus. For these three revenue sources to be sustainable, CuseMyCampus must maintain a high level of interest, popularity, and traffic from students.

**Operations**

**Geographic Location**

The geographic location of the website cannot be delimited. CuseMyCampus is located in Syracuse but does not require a physical presence in the city; many facets of CuseMyCampus can be located elsewhere. However, keeping in touch with the university students is crucial for promoting the website and staying up-to-date, therefore, staying in tune with the university requires part of the team's presence in Syracuse.

**Front End**

The student is the user of the front-end portion of the website. Here, they will find humor, academics, housing, calendars, chat, and advertisements. Students can engage in many different facets of the website due to its web 2.0 nature and integration with social networking sites.
**Back End**
Landlords and advertisers will be the main users for the back-end portion of the CuseMyCampus website. Landlords can edit, update, and post new properties for rent, while advertisers can track impressions, click-thrus, as well as submit new advertisement campaigns for approval.

**Legal and Proprietary Issues Affecting Operations**
CuseMyCampus will patent its novel way of distributing content to college students. One key issue that CuseMyCampus has encountered twice, and expects to encounter in the future, is intellectual property infringement. The nature of the website is conducive to open content and sharing. CuseMyCampus has attempted to ameliorate this predicament by placing a disclaimer as well as Terms and Conditions on the submission page.

> “By submitting any type of media to CuseMyCampus, you agree that you have obtained permission by the owner to upload his/her content to CuseMyCampus. You also agree that you have read and understand the Terms and Conditions as well as our Privacy Policy.”

(CuseMyCampus Submission Page, 2010).

Within CuseMyCampus Terms and Conditions, CuseMyCampus has laid out regulations regarding monitoring user submissions.

> “CuseMyCampus does not and cannot review all Submissions posted to or created by users accessing the CuseMyCampus Technology (including, but not limited to, the Website), and is not in any manner responsible for the content of
these communications or the activities of these users. You acknowledge that by providing you with the ability to view and distribute user-generated content through the CuseMyCampus Technology (including, but not limited to, the Website), CuseMyCampus is merely acting as a passive conduit for the distribution of such information and is not undertaking any obligation or liability relating to the content or the users' activities.”

(CuseMyCampus Terms and Conditions, 2010)

The “report” button on CuseMyCampus serves to notify the website administrators that the media in question may be in violation of copyright, trademark, or intellectual property infringement.

Management Team

The roles and positions of the Management Team reflect the type of processes that go on in to CuseMyCampus in order to operate.

CEO & CTO, Brian Weinreich

Brian Weinreich has been working and maintaining web applications for 11 years, specializing in HTML, CSS, PHP, MYSQL, Flash, and JavaScript, creating the front-end and back-end for 15+ extremely successful websites. With his in-house technical skills, as well as outgoing personality and connection with SU students, Brian will keep CuseMyCampus up-to-date and trendy among the college crowd. Brian is also obtaining his MBA from the Whitman School of Management in Syracuse, NY.
**COO & Executive Writer, Alex Piliouras**

Alex Piliouras has experience and a passion for writing, graduating cum laude from the Syracuse Newhouse. He has an educational background in script writing, comedy and general television, radio, and film management. Mr. Piliouras has had experience working at multiple cable network companies, including NBC as well as the New York Film Festival and Sesame Street. Mr. Piliouras will help oversee the overall vision of CuseMyCampus and develop strategies for company growth.

**Marketing Advisor, Sean Branagan**

Sean is founder of Communigration and a Senior Consultant. He is a recognized expert in Interactive Marketing, Technology Marketing, business-to-business marketing and using digital media for creating accountable and measurable marketing processes. A graduate of Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, much of Sean’s career has been in marketing and communications with firms selling technical products and services.

**Financials**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
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<th>September</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$110,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$130,000</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
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<td>Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross Profit</td>
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<td>$70,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
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<td>$85,000</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$105,000</td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Footnotes:

- Revenue, Cost, and Net Income (loss) are in thousands of dollars.
- 2010-1997 data are for comparative purposes only.
- Revenue includes sales of goods and services.
- Costs include all expenses incurred in the normal course of business.
- Net Income (loss) is calculated as total revenue minus total expenses.
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Bibliography


Written Summary of Capstone Project

The CuseMyCampus business plan is a written document outlining the satirical news industry and the concept of CuseMyCampus, its market, revenue, operations, and expansion throughout the United States. As I developed the business plan, I also launched the website during the spring semester of the 2010 academic year. Before I begin describing the plethora of data my business plan has formulated, I will explain CuseMyCampus and its goal for expansion.

CuseMyCampus holds to be one of the first student-driven spoof news and media websites for Syracuse University. By modifying ordinary news into something entirely new and funny, CuseMyCampus delivers to the students a form of media they can laugh at while reading. The website also features different areas of student life such as academics, housing, reviews on events, nightlife and a forum for exchanging goods between students. By combining satirical news with social networking, CuseMyCampus sets the stage for a new niche of satirical-news embedded through collegiate social networking.

One of the most important decisions a student will make in his college career is his choice of classes. In the past, many students have relied on word-of-
mouth from peers as well as the requirements set forth by the varying programs. However, with the knowledge of thousands of students, each individually rating the classes and their professors on CuseMyCampus, the student no longer has to second-guess his choices. Both finding out the reading requirements for a class, as well as discovering which professors administer exams versus essays, the students will be able to create the perfect schedule of classes.

The Housing page will have two sections for students: on-campus and off-campus housing. Both of these sections will allow students to view the rooms of their apartments or dorm rooms, rate them, comment on them, and share pictures of their own rooms. Furthermore, in the off-campus section, the student will be shown a Google Map with housing options. Students can narrow down their choices easily, and quickly glance at the map to see the exact location of their future residence. Landlords will be able to post their available apartments on the off-campus section for a rate of $10/month, per listing.

Students constantly want to engage with one-another outside of the time they spend in class. However, finding out about community events, parties, bar specials, and concerts is tricky, as one has to navigate various websites to find this specific information. Also, some students simply do not know where to look for this information, and therefore many events elude them. Due to the growing popularity of CuseMyCampus, these events will be highly attended and promoted. The calendar will be run by CuseMyCampus staff as well as user generated.

The Market page will allow student entrepreneurs to gain traction for their businesses by fusing their product or idea with the website. These students can
create a page within the website to engage the large CuseMyCampus community as well as advertise their product locally. They Marketplace will also allow students a medium for selling, exchanging, and buying goods from one another. CuseMyCampus has made the distinct decision to offer this as a free service in contrast to premium services such as eBay.

The Reviews page will overlap with many other pages, but will serve as a central source for students to get their fellow students’ opinions on Syracuse university external sources. Students can submit and read reviews regarding events, restaurants, bars, local establishments, classes, teachers, and housing. This year University Union brought in Drake and several other artists for Block Party. Because newspapers are a limited resource, the staff of the Daily Orange is the sole voice in the review. Whereas, on CuseMyCampus, multiple students represent the voice of Syracuse, allowing for a greater variety of reviews.

Lastly, the Humor page consists of student-generated content in the form of various media: articles, pictures, and videos. This has allowed CuseMyCampus to open up a novel forum for humorous discussion of real topics students care about. CuseMyCampus continually blazes into a new frontier by being the pioneers of fresh content.

The ultimate goal for CuseMyCampus is to be expanded to multiple colleges across the nation. The brand name for each college will be distinct to each campus; a memorable name that will resonate strongly with students. A staff of 4 writers, 1 executive writer, and an advertising/marketing executive will help run the campus website.
The first section of the business plan covers the executive summary. The executive summary helps briefly summarize the business, how it will market itself, the economics, the industry, management team, as well as our competitive advantage. The executive summary is the first part of the business plan, but the last written; it is predicated on all other facets of the plan.

The industry is the second section of the plan. Here I outline what industry CuseMyCampus operates within, as well as the year over year growth in the news, or more specifically satirical-news, industry. Reading various blogs as well as using the NAICS website led me to obtain strong background information on the industry at large and how I will compete within it. Also outlined is Porters Five Forces: supplier power, threat of new entry, competitive rivalry, buyer power, and threat of substitution.

Our company has moderate supplier power as the growing volume of users leads to highly valuable advertising space. We are the sole producer of online Syracuse humorous news, yet there is a low cost of changing services for the end-user.

There is a low threat of new entry, as it is extremely time consuming aggregation and organization of data for academic ratings, calendar events, and realty listings. We also have a high level of brand equity associated with humor on campus, high customer loyalty, multiple years of existence, proprietary collective database of media, and self-propelled free advertising by students through various social media outlets.

There is high competitive rivalry as there are numerous advertisers trying
to attract students through the most highly viewed publications. There are also
exists both offline and online competition for media dispersal.

The students have high buying power, with landlords and advertisers
having low buying power.

There is a moderate risk for substitution and replication. The simplicity of
website creation leads to multiple humorous websites delivering useful
information, however, our large organized database would be time-consuming to
replicate.

The next section I covered is the Market Research and Analysis. In this
section I delimit exactly who are our customers, our market size and potential, the
customer growth rate, and some data obtained from focus groups and online
surveys. Our customers are landlords and advertisers; the end-user is the student.
The student provides a market to which landlord and advertisers will target. Our
market size and potential is calculated by taking the total number of students at a
campus, and multiplying it by the percentage of these students who traffic online
blogs and humorous websites. The news industry growth rate is 11% year over
year. CuseMyCampus uses that growth rate to establish their year over year
growth as well as see how long it will take to reach our maximum market
potential. From previous focus groups and online surveys we have collected data
on what users want to see in the future of our website, and how they feel about
various pieces currently on the site.

The next section in the plan is the Marketing portion. On a broad view,
there are three different markets (students, advertisers, landlords) and there are
different methods for targeting each. We have segmented the student market further into three distinct fragments: freshmen, sophomores and juniors, seniors and alumni.

**Freshmen** – Freshmen are an extremely valuable market segment for advertisers. Advertisers who establish a good reputation with freshmen will ensure long-term profits from their recurring business over the next four years. Freshmen come to Syracuse with a blank slate, and are told what is cool, what they should buy, where they should go; CuseMyCampus aids in this transition process. Many articles, pictures, and videos will be geared to showing freshmen various new aspects of Syracuse University, including guides, how-to’s, and other interactive information for new students.

**Sophomores & Juniors** – Landlords will find this market segment particularly valuable. Many students do not know both where to look for housing as well as when they should start looking for housing. CuseMyCampus serves as a friendly reminder through integrated media, in order to push students toward renting houses and apartments. Articles, pictures, and videos will be tailored toward pushing students towards the housing page at peak sales periods of the year. Advertisers will find this market segment valuable as well, as many sophomore and juniors are able to have cars; allowing students to travel to places off campus. **Seniors & Alumni** – Seniors and alumni are valuable to advertisers. By engraining a positive brand image in the students’ minds, advertisers can ensure long-term patronage from returning alumni as well as product recognition for
national brands.

Landlords and advertisers will be approached on an individual basis, in-person, and I will explain the benefits of starting an advertising campaign or realty listing on CuseMyCampus. For students, most of the marketing is done virally though Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking websites. However, through our strong relationship with Squeeze My Tees screenprinting apparel, we will also promote the website through contests and free give-aways.

The Economics section covers details regarding operating leverage, profit margins, as well as revenue sources. There are two main sources of revenue for CuseMyCampus: real estate listings and advertisements. However, through affiliate marketing and various other sales tactics, CuseMyCampus can obtain other sources of revenue in the future – yielding semi-flexible revenue sources.

The Operations section speaks in regards to how the business will be carried out day-to-day as well as problems that are foreseen for the future. The student is the user of the front-end portion of the website. Here, they will find humor, academics, housing, calendars, chat, and advertisements. Students can engage in many different facets of the website due to its web 2.0 nature and integration with social networking sites. Landlords and advertisers will be the main users for the back-end portion of the CuseMyCampus website. Landlords can edit, update, and post new properties for rent, while advertisers can track impressions, click-thrus, as well as submit new advertisement campaigns for approval.
Alex Piliouras and Brian Weinreich are listed as the CFO and CEO, respectively, in the Management section. This section details who we are, our experience in the field, and how our advisors will help us progress.

The last section of the plan contains the Financials. A best-case/worst-case scenario income statement is shown along with a cash flow statement. The income statement shows a detailed list of our expenses, revenue, and net income. The financials section is based on multiple assumptions for the future. Mainly, as the business is new, we have to project the number of realty listings and advertisement sales we will conduct in the future. These estimates are based on statistics given by competing niche websites. They also assume our expansion to Cornell University and Marist College by the fall of 2010.

This Capstone project has given myself as well as my business great insight into how well CuseMyCampus will perform in the future, both at Syracuse and across the nation as it expands. It was a tedious process running the business, writing the plan, as well as updating the plan as the game plan of the business changed virtually every day. This project is enormously helpful for future startup projects I may have, as I can quickly draw up a bare-bones business plan to foresee the difficulty and profitability of a new startup. Gathering data through online sources as well as in-person interviews gave the business plan a variety of sources to analyze. This business plan will also be entered in the Panasci Business Plan Competition of 2011, in hopes to win the $25,000 first prize and further fund this promising startup.