



Thought Leadership Drives Earned Media for WGU Indiana

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Objective

Build Awareness

Strengthen Reputation

Drive Enrollment

In 2019, WGU Indiana was looking for a long-term agency partner to help share its story and connect with adult learners who are often underserved by traditional colleges. As Indiana's first state-endorsed online university, WGU Indiana serves more than 5,000 students across all 92 counties, with 81% balancing full- or part-time work while earning their degree. As competition increased, first from other online universities and later from traditional colleges expanding virtual offerings during the COVID-19 pandemic, WGU Indiana needed a strategic partner to build awareness, strengthen its reputation, and drive enrollment.

After previous agency engagements delivered limited results, WGU Indiana hired Dittoe PR to lead both public relations and social media efforts. Over time, the partnership expanded to support PR in six states and social media in two, allowing WGU to reach more prospective students across its growing regional footprint.

Solution

Spotlight Human-Interest Stories

Secure Thought Leadership

To ensure success, Dittoe PR took the task of storytelling to heart by developing angles rooted in human interest and trending news. To tell the story of WGU Indiana and its Central Region, Dittoe PR had to first focus on the students and alumni who experienced the University's commitment to equitable education access, workforce development and career readiness. This meant using less promotional language and more meaningful stories that connected with different audiences.

Dittoe PR identified WGU's target audiences as adult learners; non-traditional learners (those who are not likely to select a four-year college); and workers in healthcare, education, IT and general business.

With targeted, tailored media outreach and newsjacking, Dittoe PR consistently and proactively secured media interviews, contributed byline articles, letters to the editor, op-eds, award nominations and speaking engagements for WGU. The agency also co-wrote monthly LinkedIn articles for the WGU Indiana Chancellor to leverage her voice and build her digital footprint, blending Dittoe PR's public relations and social media work.

With social media, Dittoe PR capitalized on storytelling in new ways and paired compelling written content with imagery and videos developed in collaboration with the WGU team. In addition to storytelling, a strategic combination of follower acquisition, two-way engagements with followers, and mindful timing and frequency of content sharing helped to create a successful strategic framework for management and growth.

Together, Dittoe PR's team collaborated across all efforts to create a cohesive, streamlined strategy to support PR and social media goals.

Results

Driving Record-Setting PR Results for WGU Indiana

Dittoe PR exceeded expectations nearly immediately, building trust and rapport with WGU Indiana's team through strong client-agency communication and even stronger results. Initial goals were set by WGU Indiana, including quarterly thought leadership and major media placements, monthly SEO-valuable press releases, and an annual innovative PR idea.

In the first eight months of the partnership alone, Dittoe PR secured:

181 Media Placements

55M Impressions

\$750,000
Total Ad Equivalency

In volume alone, results were drastically higher than any PR results secured on behalf of WGU Indiana in years past.

After Dittoe PR's work expanded to the Central Region in July 2020, key coverage drivers included student and alumni stories within hyperlocal markets in six states, large-scale campaigns like Night Shift Nurses each November, and state- and region-wide op-ed campaigns on behalf of Chancellor and Regional Vice President Alison Bell and other university leaders.

Social media efforts for WGU Indiana and WGU Ohio channels resulted in positive increases in followers, engagements and impressions across all active channels, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

From July 2020 through June 2022, Dittoe PR achieved the following results for WGU:

958
Media Placements

1B+ Impressions

\$8.7M
Total Ad Equivalency

259
Pieces of Content

Dittoe PR's approach to a successful partnership included consistent, open communication paired with strategic, results-driven efforts for both PR and social media campaigns. Quickly and over time, Dittoe PR became a true extension of the WGU team, creating a strong partnership that withstood the test of time and obstacles to scale the University's awareness, enrollment and credibility throughout Indiana and the Central Region.