

**MARCH 19, 2019 - 6:30PM - 8:00 PM**



# #PROGRESSSU

MILLENIALS: CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF PUBLIC  
RELATIONS

Marissa Perry Sharpe & Selin Demir

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#PRogressSU

PRogressSU was a one-night panel discussion entitled, “Millennial's: Changing the Landscape of Public Relations.” This discussion focused on millennial consumer behavior and how public relations professionals (and brands that they represent) must shift their messaging to effectively market to millennial consumers and employees. Further, the panel discussed the experiences of PR professionals in adjusting to millennial demand for corporate social responsibility and ethical brands.

The event took place at the S.I Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University on Tuesday, March 19, 2019. Panelists represented a range of experiences and backgrounds. We featured Tom Armitage, Adjunct Professor at Utica College and Senior Digital Marketer Team Lead at Site-Seeker, Inc.; Evelyn C. Ingram, Director of Community and Media Relations for the Central New York Region of Wegmans Food Markets; Kelly Gaggin, Adjunct Professor, Public Relations; and Jeff Knauss, CEO and Founder of Digital Hyve. The event consisted of 8-10 pre-arranged questions and a Q&A portion following the discussion.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#PRogressSU

The target audiences for this event was public relations undergraduate and graduate students attending the Newhouse School, Newhouse faculty, and local public relations practitioners. A majority of public relations students at Newhouse are millennials, who will also dominate the future workforce. Because the focus of the panel was on millennial behavior, this age group was specifically targeted in communication and outreach efforts.

Communication strategy for this event centered around two main tools: Twitter and traditional word-of-mouth efforts. Nearly a month-long Twitter campaign on the NewhousePR Twitter page built interest in the event and provided context to the topic. PRogressSU was promoted on-campus through physical and digital posters in the Newhouse Complex, and through the connections of Newhouse public relations faculty. A Snapchat geofilter was also available within Newhouse III on the day of the event to promote attendance and foster awareness.

The second annual PRogressSU saw immense success in both its communications efforts and panel discussion for its second appearance on the SU campus. The event took place in Joyce Hergenhan Auditorium, and attracted around 80 attendees. From February 1 to March 31, the PRogressSU hashtag garnered 88 tweets, and in one day, the PRogressSU Snapchat geofilter was viewed over 1,000 times. We believe Newhouse faculty would have a strong interest in solidifying PRogressSU as an annual event.



# CLIENT BACKGROUND

## History & Mission

PRogressSU, planned and executed by Katherine Arts, John Boudreau, and Haley Filippone, was a night panel discussion highlighting women in public relations, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. The event's purpose was to address systemic inequalities, and discuss the experiences of women of various races, ages and backgrounds within the public relations industry. The panelists also brainstormed solutions to fix equality issues within the field (PRogressSU Case Study, 1). The inaugural year of the one-day event was to highlight the ways in which PR is progressing. Each year, the PRogressSU theme will change.

# CLIENT BACKGROUND

## Size

The event was held at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University on Monday, February 26, 2018. Panelists included: “Anneliese Cassalia from Syracuse-based agency Eric Mower and Associates provided insight as a junior-level employee in an agency setting; Dara J. Royer, the senior vice president and chief communications officer at Syracuse University spoke to the nonprofit sector; Master Sergeant Angel Ford of the New York Air National Guard offered a military/public affairs perspective; and Eboni Britt of Kodak shared her experiences in the corporate world” (PRogressSU Case Study, 1).

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## Problems and Opportunity THE FOCUS OF #PROGRESSU

Millennials are quickly making up the majority of the consuming American public and the workforce. Right now, millennials make up 35% of the workforce, but by 2025 it is estimated they will make up 75% of the workforce. With the millennial dollar becoming more important, brands need to adjust the way they communicate with their publics. Millennials are the most skeptical consumers and do significantly more research than preceding generations before making a purchase.

This shift in consumer behavior means that brands must also shift to meet the needs of their public, which means that communications professionals must change their behaviors.

If public relations professionals, and by extension the brands they represent, are unable to understand and communicate more effectively towards millennial consumers, they are in danger of losing their core business demographic. While many brands have been able to stick to more traditional methods for a number of years, as millennials age and have more disposable income, it has become more difficult for them to stay relevant within their respective locations (i.e. Sears).

This year's #PRogressSU panel sparked an important discussion on how public professionals can adjust to the changing millennial landscape of public relations.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- Proximity to millennial consumers
- Strong network of experienced PR professionals
- Reputation of prior successful panel
- Significant resources available to execute the panel discussion

## WEAKNESSES

- Time constraints in researching, planning, and executing the panel
- Lack of experience in planning and executing an event of this magnitude

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Reach out to local news organizations
- Use connections in the law school to advertise the panel
- Advice from last years panel coordinators on how to best run the panel

## THREATS

- Timing of spring break and finals might affect attendance
- Some prospective panel guests are not local



# STATEMENT OF HARM

If the opportunity to reach far more consumers and likely become a more ethical brand (millennials value corporate social responsibility more than other generations) is not realized, many brands that have survived several generations may lose significant sales. This may have significant effects on the stock market and unemployment, and therefore people that rely on the success of these brands cannot afford for them not to change their behaviors.

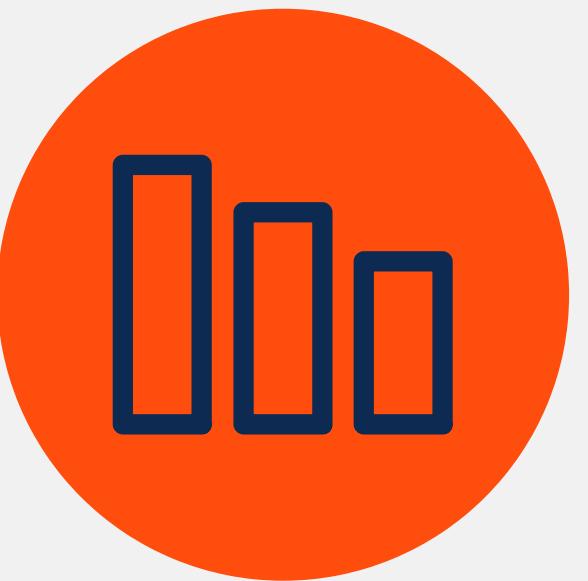
# Identification & Description of Target Publics



**SU Undergraduate and  
Graduate students outside of  
Newhouse**



**Newhouse Students & Faculty**



**Local practitioners**

# TARGET

## Demographics

SU Undergraduate and Graduate students outside of Newhouse: The undergraduate population includes Generation Z, but the majority of the undergraduate and graduate student population at SU consists of millennials.

Newhouse Students: Both the undergraduate and graduate population at Newhouse consist of mostly millennials. Regardless of whether they are Gen Z or millennials, they are interested in working in the communications field in some capacity and would benefit from knowing how the field has changed.

Newhouse Faculty: NH Faculty would be interested in hearing how the communications field has changed in the past several years now that a new generation is both entering the field and being targeted by it. They are responsible for educating and placing the new generation of PR professionals. They may also be interested in promoting the events to satisfy Newhouse Speaks requirements.

Local practitioners: Those in the field now, including millennials, Gen X, and Boomers, would be interested in how the field has changed and how they can better perform their jobs. Newhouse students are a subset of the larger SU student population, which likely take up the majority of the market share.

# TARGET

## Psychographics

SU Students outside of NH: They may not have solid opinions or awareness of the problem we have identified. Their awareness is likely limited to their own interactions with brands.

NH Students: This public is likely more aware of the issue as they have studied it in their classes. This public, made up of mostly millennials, likely also believes that the field has changed and that brands have had to find new ways to market to millennials. As students, they may know less about how the field has changed.

NH Faculty: Some members of faculty may know more about how the field has changed in the past several years depending on their age and how often they interact with people still in the field. They likely are aware that there has been a change, especially in a field so young and dependent on technology, but they may not be aware as to the details of that shift.

Local practitioners: Have firsthand knowledge of a shift in the field, but are experiencing that shift from their singular lense of their day to day jobs. They may be unaware of theoretical or other macro explanations for the shift.

# TARGET

## Influentials

SU Students outside of NH & NH Students: Considers themselves the future, the social media generation, interacts with brands one-on-one via social media, puts more weight on social consciousness of a brand and does research before spending money. They are motivated by professional success and personal life satisfaction, and they fear stagnancy and being 'unaware' of their environment.

NH Faculty: Considers themselves the cultivators of the next generation of PR professionals. By continuing to learn about the field they teach, they fear irrelevance or not being up to date with information and resources.

Local practitioners: Considers themselves to be innovators in the field, practicing PR on the day to day and seeing what works and what does not. Professional success and relevance motivates them, as they fear being outdated and uninformed.

# TARGET

## Media Habits

SU Students outside of NH: Mainstream media is primarily the source of information that this public attends. Opinion leaders are mainstream social media influencers, ranging from celebrities and socialites, to political pundits.

NH Students: Similar to other students, mainstream media is primarily the source of information that this public attends. Opinion leaders are mainstream social media influencers as well, but NH students are also exposed to niche media including PR and journalism related information outlets.

NH Faculty: Mainstream and local news outlets, some social media use as well. Despite their social media use, they do not have the same influencers as SU students. Their influencers are other professionals and academics

Local practitioners: A combination of mainstream media influencer and niche PR media influencers. Influencers also include other professionals

# WOKE WANDA



## Demographics:

- Age: 23
- Gender: Female
- Salary/household income: 10,000 (student, and inner-city high school tutor)
- Location: Suburban
- Education: College Junior
- Wanda took two years off between high school and college to save money for her education.
- Wanda is an English major, and NMM Newhouse Minor
- Family: Wanda comes from a two-parent household, parents are blue collar workers, and she is the oldest of two younger siblings.

## Preferred Media:

- Wanda often uses Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and occasionally Facebook to keep up with family and friends. She also has a YouTube vlog channel where she holds 50,000 subscribers.
- You can often find Wanda in Food.com between her classes and having general hangout time with her friends. Wanda can be reached through posters and general announcements throughout the school.

## Goals/Challenges:

- Wanda aspires to be a brand marketer for minority owned beauty products. Her dream is to establish a convention each year where black owned beauty companies can market their products to consumers.
- Wanda has issues with buying products where she does not agree with the company's morals and values, but she does not feel as though she has suitable alternatives. She hopes to help socially responsible companies to develop successful products and campaigns.

## Words and images that resonate with Wanda:

Justice, Corporate Social Responsibility, Awareness, Black-Owned, Minority Owned, Beauty, Black Lives Matter

- Images of natural beauty, hair products, and minority owned business brands resonate with Wanda. She would click on a video where she can see visual representation of herself.
- Her writing style tends to be verbose when there is something she's passionate about.

## Description of public:

- Wanda represents minority millennials who demand social justice.
- Wanda is directly affected by the problem presented at the PRogressSU event.



# TRENDY TAYLOR

## Demographics:

- Age: 25
- Gender: Female
- Salary/household income: 25,000 (student, and Graduate Assistant)
- Location: Suburban
- Education: Taylor is a BDJ Newhouse graduate student.
- Family: Taylor comes from a two-parent household and is an only child. Taylor's father is deceased and her mother lives alone in New York City.

## Preferred Media:

- Taylor's favorite media platforms include Instagram and Twitter. She also posts weekly lifestyle blogs on Wordpress.
- Like Wanda, Taylor can be reached through posts and flyers throughout the building, and through her University email.

## Goals/Challenges:

- Taylor aspires to be an on-air personality for a major entertainment network. She enjoys the hottest trends in fashion and celebrity gossip.
- Taylor considers herself a feminist, and has issues with the lack of diversity some networks have concerning on-air talent. She supports the #MeToo movement and recently participated in the 2019 NYC Women's March.

## Words and images that resonate with Taylor:

- Women Empowerment, Equity, Respect, MeToo, Female, Sexuality, Fairness, Peace, Entertainment, Media, Fashion
- Images that resonate with Taylor include images of women, beauty, media, and entertainment.
- Taylor enjoys a short and concise writing style that screams resounding themes.

## Description of public:

- Taylor represents millennials who support feminism and the #MeToo movement.
- Taylor is directly affected by the problem above.



# CONSERVATIVE CHARLES

## Demographics:

- Age: 54
- Gender: Male
- Salary/household income: 90,000 (Agency Partner)
- Location: Urban - Buffalo, NY
- Education: Newhouse Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations

## Relations

- Family: Charles comes from a working class family, but currently lives middle class with his wife and three children.

## Preferred Media:

- Charles primarily uses Twitter and Facebook. He enjoys listening to NPR, and is a subscriber to the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.
- Charles can also be reached through email or the agency network.

## Goals/Challenges:

- Charles is a seasoned public relations professional who would like to bring diversity and progression in the work place, but doesn't necessarily have the tools to implement them. Even though he works for an agency, he hopes to convince his firm to do work with clients who not only have a diverse workforce, but who value diversity.

- Charles has problems understanding and processing millennial messaging. He has kids who are millennials, so he tries to bounce ideas off his kids for the inspiration. He also has trouble connecting with younger Account managers at the agency.

## Words and images that resonate with Charles:

- Management, Leadership, Progression, Success, Millennials, Agency, Firm, Partnership, Diversity
- Charles would click on videos expanding on how to become a better leader, and to continue to move forward with the times. Charles would likely click on a short video that he could quickly watch and receive the message.
- Charles' writing style is verbose when requested from clients, but most often he writes short and concise when communicating with employees.

## Description of public:

- o Charles represents Generation X public relations professionals who seek to understand millennial consumer engagement on a personal and professional level.
- o Charles is indirectly affected by the problem.



# GOAL

## PRogressSU

The goal of #PRogressSU was to run a successful, well attended event that begins the discussion of changes in millennial consumer behavior, and how PR professionals (and brands that they represent) must shift their messaging to effectively market to millennial consumers.

Further, we hoped to discuss ways PR professionals could adjust to millennial demand for corporate social responsibility and ethical brands.

“

**OBJECTIVE 1:  
TO PLAN A SPEAKING PANEL  
COMPRISED OF DIVERSE PR  
PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN  
UPSTATE, NY ON TUESDAY, MARCH  
19, 2019.**



**STRATEGY:**

USE EVENT INAUGURAL SUCCESS TO  
GAIN SUPPORT AND INTEREST IN  
THE EVENT.

**Tactics:**

- Reach out to Professor Luttrell and Professor Meath for recommendations and contacts for possible panelists
- Work with Betsy Feely to secure date and location for panel
- Book the 140 Joyce Hergenhan Auditorium to hold event
- Comprise event information for pitch to potential panelists via email
- Promote the event on Twitter, Instagram, Newhouse PR listserv
- Create posters within Newhouse guidelines to post around the building

“

**OBJECTIVE 2:  
TO ATTAIN 70 TOTAL RETWEETS  
AND 100 TOTAL LIKES FOR TWEETS  
ASSOCIATED TO THE EVENT ON  
THE NEWHOUSE PR TWITTER PAGE  
BY THE END OF THE EVENT ON  
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019.**



**STRATEGY:**

UTILIZE NEWHOUSEPR TWITTER  
FOLLOWING TO PROMOTE  
#PROGRESSSU.

**Tactics:**

- Once panelists are confirmed, tweet a weekly spotlight of the panelists
- Create and execute social media campaigns about corporate social responsibility and breaking news related to the topic (i.e Gucci and Prada blackface scandal and boycott)
- Share relevant stories and articles on millennial consumerism
- Create interactive posts to hear student thoughts on brand scandals

“

**OBJECTIVE 3:  
TO ESTABLISH PROGRESSSU AS AN  
ANNUAL NEWHOUSE PR EVENT,  
OCCURRING EACH FEBRUARY OF  
THE ACADEMIC YEAR.**



**STRATEGY:**

ENSURE THE SECOND PROGRESSSU  
EVENT HAS AT LEAST 100  
ATTENDEES, SO THAT  
ADMINISTRATION WILL  
UNDERSTAND ITS IMPORTANCE.

**Tactics:**

- Promote digital posters on Newhouse social media pages
- Speak with Newhouse PR Progressors to promote event with students, and to request attendance for extra credit through #NewhouseSpeaks
- Share relevant stories and articles on millennial consumerism
- Coordinate planning committee or established curriculum for students to plan #PRogressSU with an approved theme

# KEY MESSAGES



## EMAILS: Students and Panelists

- We wanted to send emails to students through the listserv to inform them of the date, place, time, and subject of our panel. We wanted to include some form of media in order to draw their attention to the event.
- In order to get panelists, we solicited them via email based on suggestions. We informed them of the date, place, time, subject, and why we think they would be a good fit for the panel.



## POSTERS: Online and Physical

- Online and tangible posters were able to be hung around the school, sent via social media and email. They were hung in conspicuous community places to be able to draw the most amount of attention to the event.

## TWEETS: Publicizing the Event

- We wanted use Twitter to inform students, faculty, and other followers of Newhouse who would be interested in the panel. We sent tweets with the date, place, time, and subject of our panel. We also wanted to include some form of media in order to draw their attention to the tweet.

# BUDGET

#PROGRESSSU

- A reception that included cheese and crackers, fruit and cupcakes- \$200
- Gifts for panelists, miscellaneous expenses (parking, posters, etc.)-\$100,
- SnapChat Geofilter- \$13

= **\$313**

# EVALUATION

## #PROGRESSSU

**Objective 1:** The PRogressSU event was planned and executed successfully. The four panelists for this event were confirmed several weeks prior to the event. These panelists were found through personal and professional recommendations from Professor Luttrell, Professor Meath and the inaugural PRogressSU team.

The Newhouse School's Joyce Hergenhan Auditorium was booked in anticipation of large attendance for the event. Promotion of the panel was successful within Newhouse. Posters were hung in popular areas within the Newhouse buildings, and were streamed on Newhouse digital monitors. Panelists received Newhouse gifts at the end of the discussion.

**Objective 2:** Once we confirmed the panelists, we generated ten original tweets from March 1 to March 19 through NewhousePR's twitter account. As you will see on the content calendar, there was generally a Monday, Wednesday and Friday schedule for the promotional tweets. The most popular tweets involved our panel spotlights. Although not entirely consistent, the promotion and event garnered 88 tweets using the #PRogressSU hashtag. Attendees also used the #LRNSMPR hashtag to tweet 15 times during the event.

The snap chat filter received 1,100 views, 354 swipes, and 37 uses. This means around half of attendees used the filter. The filter could have been promoted more throughout the discussion. Lastly, Tom Armitage, Adjunct Professor at Utica College and Senior Digital Marketer Team Lead at Site-Seeker, Inc., wrote a blog post concerning the event entitled, "How To Best Reach and Sell to Millennials in 2019."

# EVALUATION

## #PROGRESSSU

**Objective 3:** PRogressSU attracted 80 attendees and was successful as a student run, second annual event. This year we used the momentum and name recognition to garner attendance. Some improvements could have been to start to solidify panelists early in February, so that promotion could begin earlier. This can ensure that the Herg auditorium has even more attendees.

An important PRogressSU takeaway is that events held in the early evening are usually attended because most students are done with class. The event was also successful due to students fulfilling their last minute Newhouse speaks requirements. Further, it is helpful to have notable panelists for the event. We featured a Newhouse professor, executive of a local public relations firm, a mid-level public relations professional, and a director for a notable Syracuse brand.

We've learned several lessons throughout the process. First, it may be helpful for the new PRogressSU group to be assembled before the spring semester begins, so that topics and panelists can be chosen by the end of January. This will allow the group to promote for longer periods. Next, it is helpful to have a topic that is relevant for each panel. Each year the event should continue to focus on ways public relations is progressing. This will ensure interest for the event. Lastly, the next group, similiar to the inaugural group, should be paired with a class that focuses on social media analytics. Last year's group was better equiped the tools to measure those tactics, and it would be a perfect fit for a 1.5 credit elective. Generally, the second annual PRogressSU event was successful, and should be for many years to come.

# CONTENT CALENDAR

## #PROGRESSSU

In planning and preparing for the panel, we utilized both the NewhousePR twitter account. We tweeted mostly from the account, but liked and re-tweeted posts pertaining to our panel from panelists and the main Newhouse account. We also had Betsy send out several email blasts to both graduate and undergraduate public relations students. We made sure to tweet every few days, and that what was shared contained graphics and traditional tweets.

# March 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 Announce via twitter	2
3	4 Tweet Jeff quote	5	6 Betsy email blast	7	8 Tweet Tom quote	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Betsy email blast Main NH tweet Evelyn quote	16
17	18 Tweet Kelly quote	Final reminders Day of Panel	20	21		

# APPENDIX

#PROGRESSSU

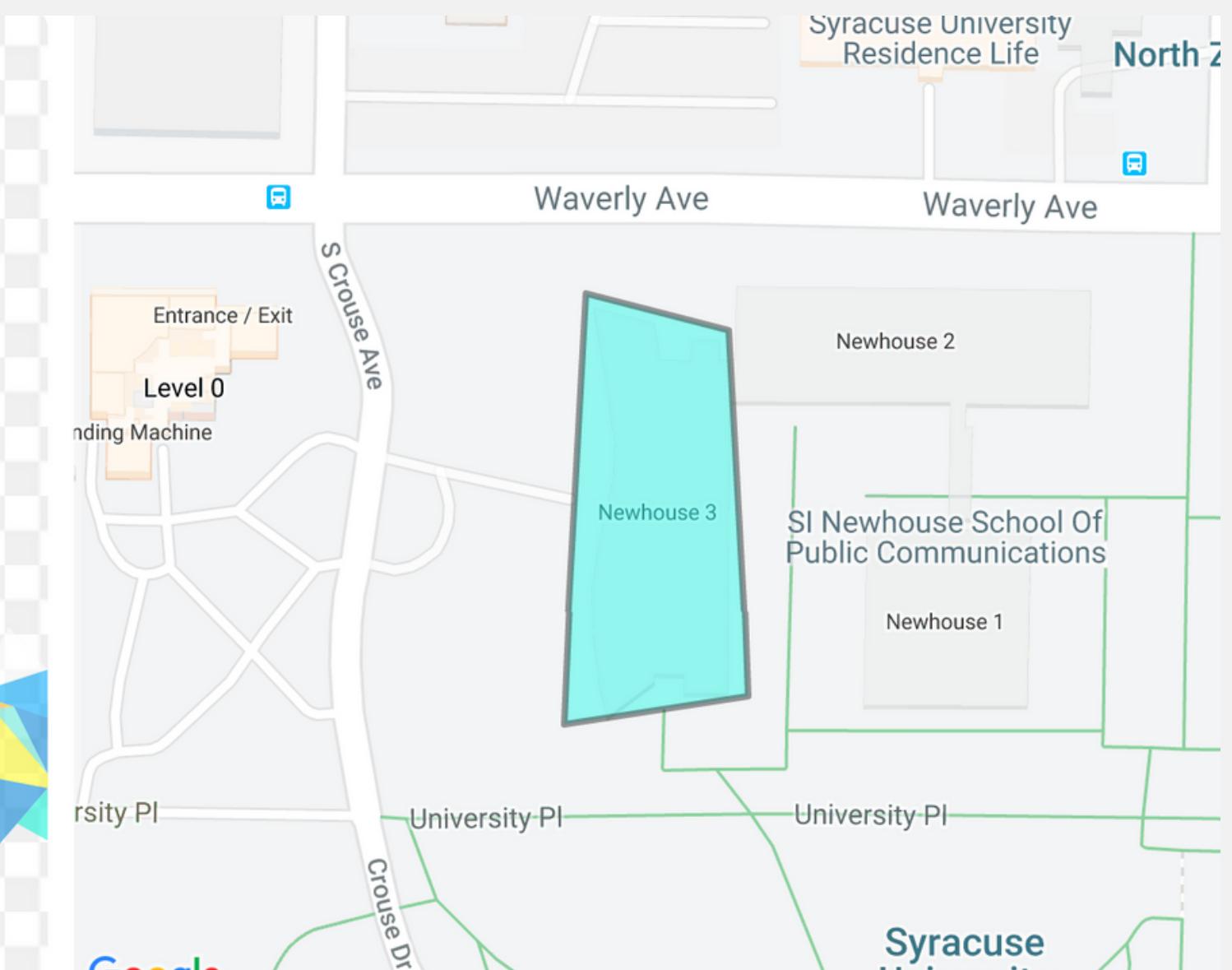
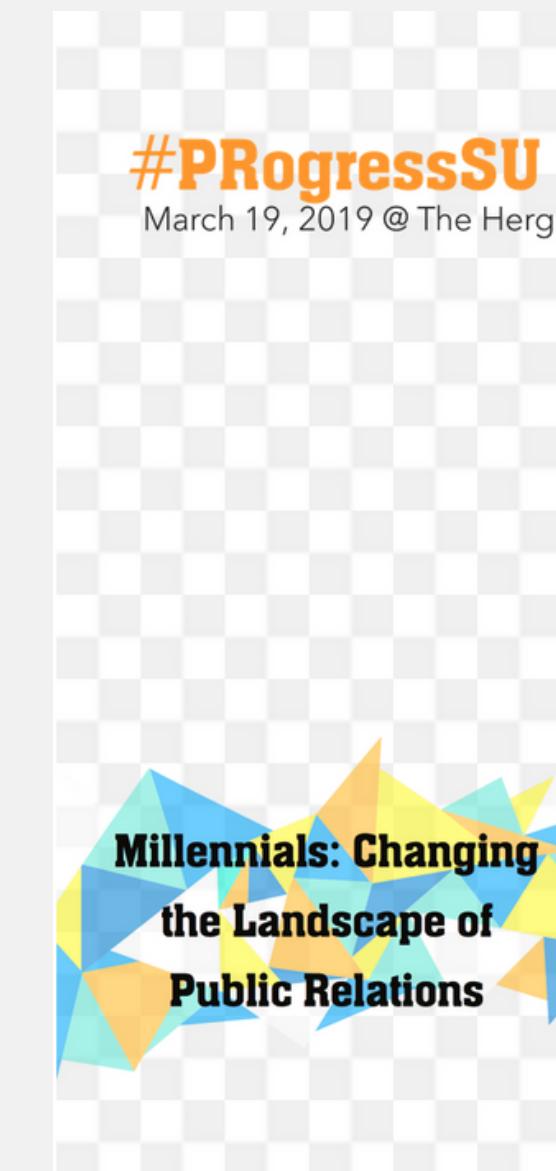
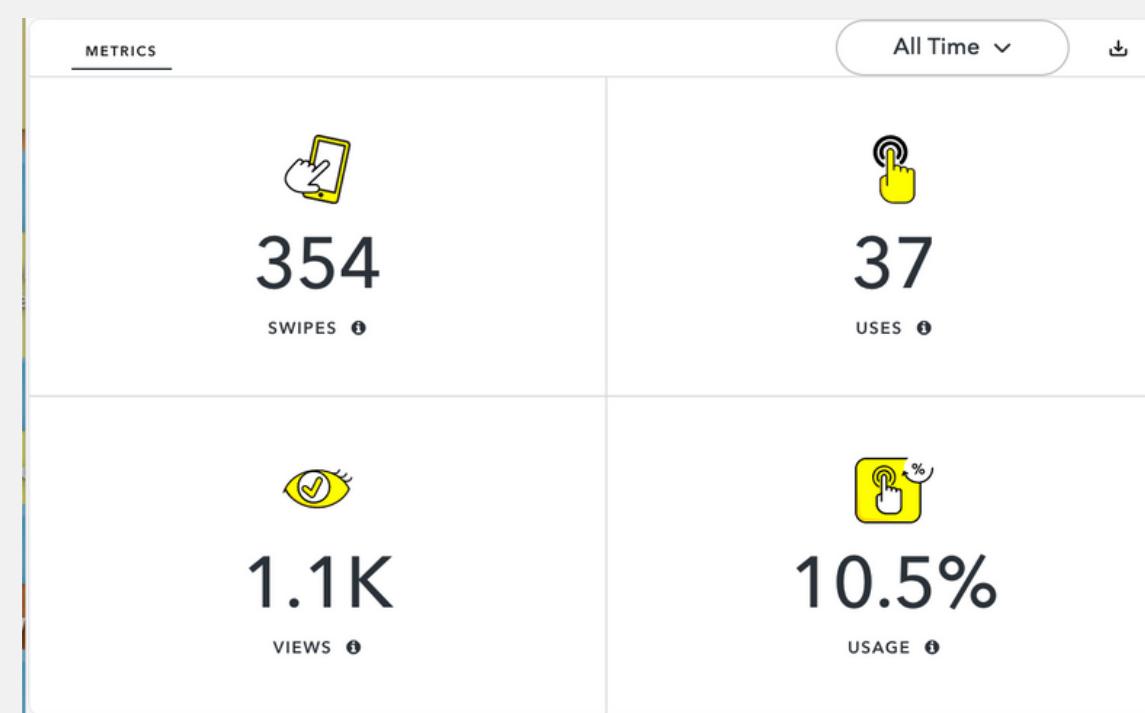
**Twitter: @NewhousePR #PRogressSU #LRNSMPR**

**Meltwater Dashboard: [https://sharable-dashboard.meltwater.com/sharable\\_dashboard\\_viewer/59e522189a12b769bfa04dcc/1fdd1597-1cd0-4e65-87f6-e439daab7957#slideCover](https://sharable-dashboard.meltwater.com/sharable_dashboard_viewer/59e522189a12b769bfa04dcc/1fdd1597-1cd0-4e65-87f6-e439daab7957#slideCover) [Password: Mad1994!]**

**Blog: <https://www.site-seeker.com/how-to-best-reach-and-sell-to-millennials-in-2019/>**

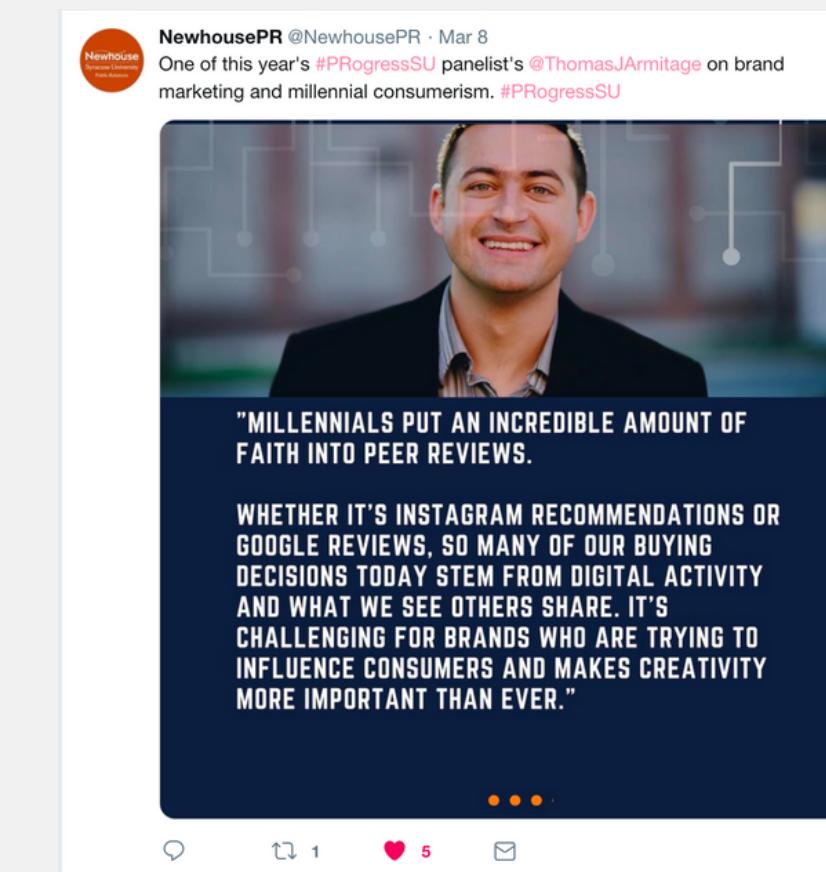
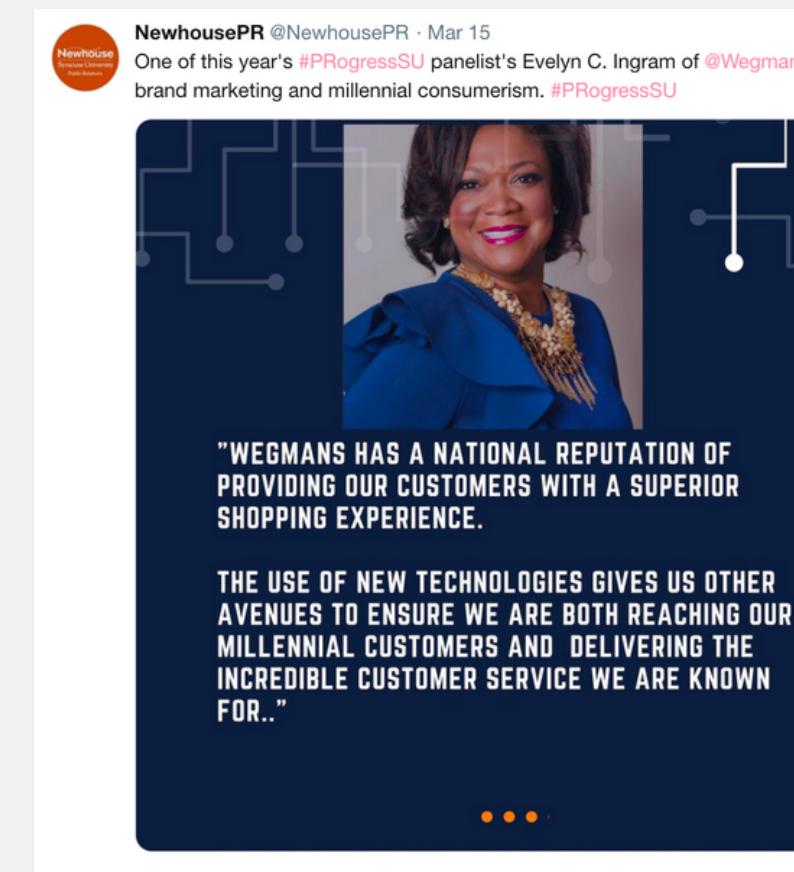
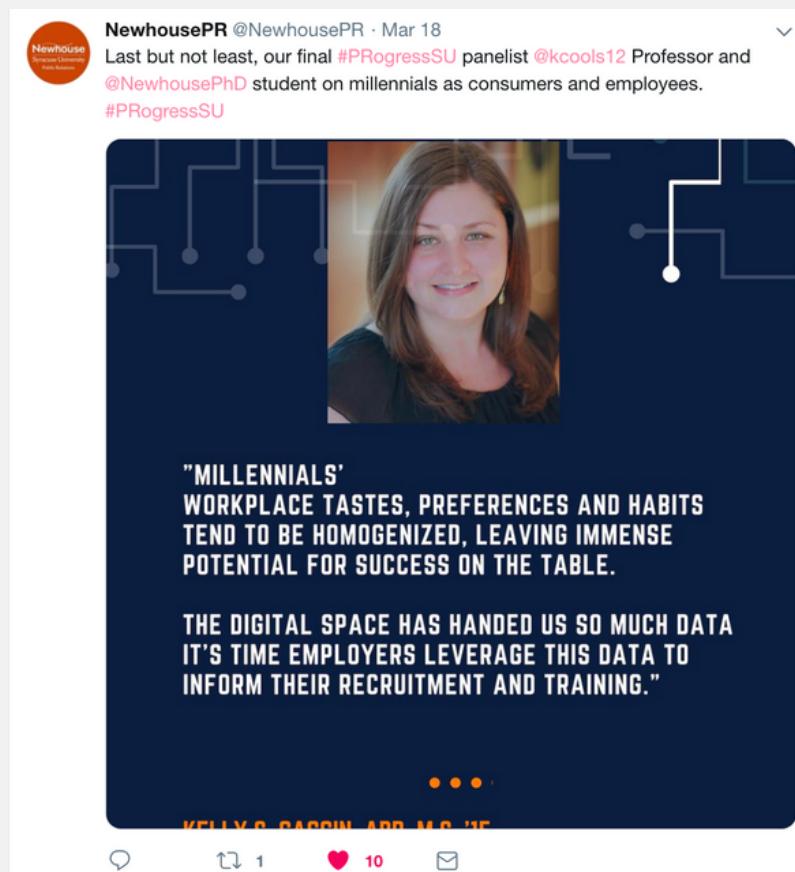
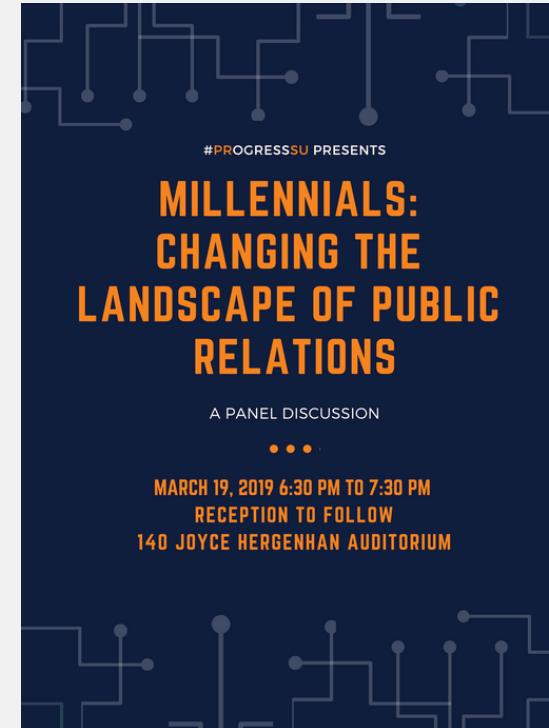
# APPENDIX

## #PROGRESSSU



# APPENDIX

## #PROGRESSSU



# REFERENCES

## #PROGRESSU

Allison, M. (2018, September 05). Does PR Need to Evolve for the Millennial Generation? Retrieved from <https://blog.trendkite.com/trendkite-blog/does-pr-need-to-evolve-for-the-millennial-generation>

Armitage, T. (n.d.). How To Best Reach and Sell to Millennials in 2019. Retrieved March 21, 2019, from <https://www.site-seeker.com/how-to-best-reach-and-sell-to-millennials-in-2019/>

Carufel, R. (2019, March 25). How millennials are changing the brand loyalty landscape. Retrieved from <https://www.agilitypr.com/pr-news/public-relations/millennials-changing-brand-loyalty-landscape/>

Gosselin, J. (2018, June 08). Millennials are the Future of PR and They're Not as Bad as You Think. Retrieved from <http://www.themeasurementstandard.com/2018/06/millennials-are-the-future-of-pr/>

[https://ginaluttrellphd.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/progresssu\\_final.pdf#page=2&zoom=auto,-89,39](https://ginaluttrellphd.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/progresssu_final.pdf#page=2&zoom=auto,-89,39)