The UNCG Business Summit

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The UNCG Business Summit

- An annual half-day event
- Target audience is largely but not exclusively external
- Keynote by a provocative, attention-getting speaker
- Additional session on UNCG resources
- First held in October 2006

Objective and Strategy

- Objective
  - Strengthen the relationship between UNCG and leaders of the local corporate community
- Strategy
  - Bring business leaders onto campus to talk about the relationship between the university and the business community
  - Showcase UNCG resources and initiatives of benefit to the business community

Why hold an event like this?

- The business community is our partner in economic development
- Economic development has never been a higher priority
  - Directives from Board of Governors and President Bowles
  - Priorities of local economic development groups

Why hold an event like this?

- We need to raise awareness of UNCG’s role and resources
  - University presents a complex, often opaque face to the community
  - Historically, our economic development efforts have been decentralized, non-strategic
  - Diverse UNCG programs are of value to business, but many are little known

Why hold an event like this?

- We need to build new relationships in the wake of dramatic changes in Greensboro’s business community
- We’re in the state’s most competitive market for higher education
**Event organizer**

- The UNCG Corporate Relations Committee
  - Committee of the UNCG Board of Visitors
  - Advocacy group and focus group
  - Mission: To develop partnerships with corporations to benefit both the corporate partners and the university.
  - Meets monthly; meetings typically include a presentation on an academic program or initiative

**Event budget**

- Total budget under $10,000 both years
  - Sponsorships
    - Nine corporate sponsors in 2007
    - Three internal units
  - $25 registration fee added in 2007
  - No impact on attendance

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**Business Summit 2006**

- Keynote speaker: Bob McDowell, Vice President, Microsoft Corp.
  - Connection: Wife is a UNCG graduate
  - Outspoken advocate for change in higher ed
  - "There is a real disconnect between business and higher education about what the real needs are. We can't find enough talent coming out of the U.S. school system."

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**Business Summit 2006**

- After the keynote speech, two concurrent breakout sessions
  - Leslie Boney on the UNC System’s role in economic development
  - UNCG resources relating to HR, led by a member of the Corporate Relations Committee

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**Business Summit 2006**

- Results and buzz
  - About 90 people attended, 2/3 external
  - Terrific evaluations (five-point scale)
    - Overall event: 4.5
    - McDowell speech: 4.9
    - Would you come again: 100 percent yes
    - Recommend to a friend: 100 percent yes
    - Bonus: Bob McDowell and his wife gave UNCG $3.85 million

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**Business Summit 2007**

- FedEx provided an ideal keynote speaker
  - David Bronczek, CEO of FedEx Express, its largest business unit
  - CRC member had connection to FedEx board member
  - Timing ideal from their perspective
  - Reception held the evening before the event with top local executives
Business Summit 2007

- Revised format
  - After the keynote, one session with faculty members paired with executives of partner companies
  - Center for New North Carolinians and Duke Energy
  - Geography and Syngenta
  - Interior Architecture and City of Greensboro
  - MBA Program and Tyco Electronics
  - Lunch speaker
    - Ralph Shelton, statewide Business Committee on Higher Education

- Attendance more than doubled
- Terrific evaluations (five-point scale)
  - Overall event: 4.4
  - Bronczek speech: 4.6
  - Would you come again: 100 percent yes
  - Recommend to a friend: 100 percent yes
- Questions about next year started at lunch

Results vs. Objective

- Objective
  - Strengthen the relationship between UNCG and leaders of the local corporate community

- Results
  - Attendance (quantity, quality and growth) and evaluations indicate the event is having a positive impact

Going forward

- Lessons learned
  - External input is critical to success
  - Success creates expectations
  - Planning is now year-round
- Challenges
  - It takes time to grow an event like this
  - There’s a lot of competition for executives’ time and attention
  - Creating a truly interactive event is difficult