



Date: March 27, 2018

Client: Year Up

Project: Corporate Partner Messaging

Introduction: The following document reflects Hiker’s developing vision for key messaging to corporate partners. The purpose of this messaging is to assist in rapid, scalable corporate partner development from top-of-the-funnel engagement (interest-building, information gathering) through follow-up nurturing (follow-up information) and on to conversion (and a commitment to enroll in the program).

In preparation for creating the new proposed messaging, Hiker has conducted several hours of interviews with Year Up stakeholders. We watched hours of existing video content and explored both Year Up marketing materials and competitor language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THIS DOCUMENT

- I. ONE-PAGE OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE PARTNER MESSAGING POSITION
- II. POSITION SUMMARY
- III. AUDIENCE ASSESSMENT
 - 1. THE CONTEXT
- IV. PROPOSED KEY MESSAGES (4 TOTAL – more in development)

CORPORATE PARTNER MESSAGING

Whether our potential corporate partner is a C-suite decision maker or a soon-to-be brand champion who will need to take the idea “up the ladder,” Year Up messaging must provide a verbal tool kit that inspires action at the strategic corporate policy level.

We see an opportunity to improve messaging to corporate partners by focusing on how Year Up enables companies to achieve their business objectives and effectively future-proof workforce challenges. **Our goal is for corporate partners to think of Year Up as a strategic business asset that can help achieve their short-term and long-term business objectives, as well as support their long-term strategy for sourcing and developing talent.**

By focusing on the ways Year Up can impact strategic business objectives, assist long-term growth, and provide competitive advantage, we shift the conversation away from the language of commodity to one of value and relationship. In this scenario, Year Up becomes more than a service. To our corporate partners Year Up becomes thought leaders who provide corporations with a powerful competitive advantage. Year Up becomes the smarter way to do business ... a solution for forward-thinking business leaders ... the proven plan savvy businesses utilize to overcome the skills gap.

In addition to hosting interns, which of course is central to company involvement, Year Up provides corporate partners with a powerful way to deepen their commitment to volunteerism and social responsibility. Partners can engage through special in-service days, mentorships, coaching, speaking engagements, resume reviews, mock interviews, and more. By working with Year Up, corporate partners can be leaders, nationally and locally, in areas of diversity, workforce development, and innovation, while at the same time supporting their own long-term hiring programs.

Speaking to outcomes: At the start of engagement, potential corporate partners often approach Year Up simply to satisfy a business need. Corporate social responsibility follows. Even when partners do come to Year Up looking to do some social good, the point person responsible for actually filling jobs has a serious need and driving interest in Year Up’s ability to assist in their company’s workforce development. Current messaging does a good job of addressing this need through transactional, benefit-driven language. We think it can be strengthened further by consistently applying numbers and outcomes to benefit language.

As a final thought, we encourage Year Up communicators to embrace the narrative of a “One Story” perspective. By this we simply mean that in marketing, social posts, website content, or any other external touchpoint to always keep in mind that the Year Up story — our mission and what we are trying to accomplish — must look, feel, and sound the same no matter our target audience. In telling the Year Up story, we tell the same story. To partners, students, donors, volunteers. The only difference is how we arrive at the story. Year Up provides a two-way street of opportunity. Both students *and* corporations benefit. The Year Up program strengthens companies *and* communities. It serves personal goals *and* corporate business objectives. Our common ground is always the bridge. The straight-forward transaction: a good career for one, a good employee for the other. That is the “why” and the “what” of the work we do. Year UP is a bridge that spans the opportunity gap and brings people together.

SUMMARY

To strengthen messaging to corporate partners we propose:

- Elevate language that positions Year Up as an asset for achieving business-objectives
 - A. Immediate tactical needs and long-term strategic objectives
 - B. Flexible/adaptable system and therefore scalable
 - C. Future-proofing — able to pivot to market demands for rapid growth
 - D. Power of diversity to inspire innovation
 - E. Support need for talent placement at all levels of experience through YUPRO, an independent job placement organization serving Year Up graduates

- Position Year Up as providing a tangible competitive advantage for businesses
 - A. Provides a steady pipe line of talent, which makes budgeting and asset allocation easier and quite possibly cheaper
 - B. Grads stay 2 times longer on average (Retention)
 - C. Grads add immediate value faster — trained to market-determined need
 - D. Diversity of the young adults trained in YU's intensive one-year program
 - E. Grads receive high-quality training in both hard and invaluable soft skills
 - F. Corporations look good for engaging in socially responsible programs

- Position Year Up as a valuable partner relationship not a service (which can be more easily commoditized).
 - A. Year Up are thought leaders in workforce development
 - B. Work with corporations in *ongoing development* of students/grads
 - C. For forward-thinking business leaders, a smarter way to do business, a savvier way to gain a competitive edge, providing ability to customize as market shifts.
 - D. A way for intern managers to “get noticed” and advance their careers

- Employ the use of facts and numbers even more to push outcome-driven language that clearly states the competitive advantage Year Up provides

- Stay mindful of a one-story approach to telling the Year Up story, which will help better focus the strategic intent and tactical messages of each marketing/PR communication.

AUDIENCE ASSESSEMENT — THE CONTEXT

Corporate partners might be a mid-level manager working in HR or a department director with positions to fill. Corporate partners might be former grads or supporters who have worked with Year Up in the past. Each of these audience subsets has slightly different needs and will require (tactically) different ways of furthering engagement. That said, messaging is primarily for framing a strategic story. In crafting messaging, we assume the potential partner knows little or nothing of Year Up and are at first motivated to investigate Year Up further by a transactional need.

Considering partners may be:

- Looking to fill a business need first and foremost

Thinking/feeling: *Will this work for us at our size? I have a lot of positions to fill. Should I bother with this or just stick with Acme Recruiters like last time?*

- Beholden to budget and time limitations

Thinking/feeling: *Ok. let's see what this program costs. I need to crunch some numbers. We have to move fast. What's their process?*

- Moved by corporate social responsibility needs, but it's not their primary reason for engaging

Thinking/feeling: *Oh, wow. This is a great organization. But I really just need to fill some positions. I wonder if this is more a CSR group thing? Is the training done right? Can I use them?*

- Focused on short-term need (filling a position) and not recognizing long-term return on investment (e.g. employees who deliver greater value over time)

Thinking/feeling: *Wait, this is a one-year program? I need to fill positions faster than that. This is frustrating. I never have time to do this right...*

- Wanting and needing more diversity at their company

Thinking/feeling: *We need more diversity in this company. This is about staying relevant. We need some different voices added to the mix. We need to reflect our community better.*

- Curious why their competitors and/or other divisions within their company are using Year Up

Thinking/feeling: *Why are others doing this and we aren't? Is this smarter? Are we missing out on an opportunity here? Are we getting left behind? What do they know that we don't?*

- In need of a solution they can repeat (i.e. what is scalable)

Thinking/feeling: *This is a non-profit. Are they going to be around? We're opening offices in Dallas and Philly next year. I need a long-term partner that can grow with us.*

- In position where program success impacts career success

Thinking/feeling: *Wary if this new way of doing things is worth it. The boss is really leaning on me. I can't afford to mess this up.*

PROPOSED KEY MESSAGES

Key Message 1 — SAVE TIME AND RESOURCES RECRUITING GREAT TALENT

Year Up’s partner-driven, industry-specific training program enables you to find the qualified talent your company needs faster, reducing time and resources spent on recruitment.

Key theme expanded:

Even the best-planned talent search can drag out, wasting time and eroding your bottom line. Year Up offers a better way to manage your talent pipeline and control expenses. For starters, we’re a nonprofit. So, we aren’t looking for ways to charge you more. Our goal is to equip talented and motivated young people with the technical and professional skills necessary to fill the middle-skill roles you need and add economic value to your company. We do that by first training our students in the skills your company requires, then giving you the opportunity (during our student’s 6-month learning internship) to further shape those skills as needed. As a result, should you hire a Year Up graduate, you can be sure they’ll walk in on day one ready to contribute. What’s more, because you make a one-time investment in each student intern training, there’s never an extra placement fee. That gives your company a distinct business advantage and a steadier, more reliable pipeline for qualified talent. Plus, if your company needs to fill positions requiring more experience, our graduate-only job placement organization (YUPRO) can work with you to place talent at all levels of professional experience.

Key Message 2 – TAP INTO DIVERSITY THAT LEADS TO INNOVATION

Year Up graduates bring the kind of diversity — in experience, background, thought, and point of view — that is critical to the success of today’s most innovative companies.

Key theme expanded:

At a time when companies must increase employee diversity or risk becoming irrelevant — to their customers and their communities — a partnership with Year Up makes good business sense. Nobody has access to as large and diverse a pool of talent as Year Up. Nobody has our passion for bridging the Opportunity Divide. And nobody has our experience successfully moving young adults from under-represented communities onto pathways of career opportunity. Today, 8 in 10 African-American and Latino people are excluded from the hiring process when a 4-year degree is required, yet the combined annual purchasing power of these groups is 1.4 trillion and growing. What’s more, by 2065 non-white groups will make up a majority of U.S. population. The business case for diversity is clear. The smartest companies know that diversity isn’t just a PR issue — it’s a business issue. Diversity of talent means diversity of perspective — and *that* can lead to the kind of fresh, new thinking that gives your business a competitive edge. No wonder over 250 of America’s most innovative companies already partner with Year Up.

Key Message 3 – INCREASE EMPLOYEE RETENTION & LOYALTY

Because Year Up graduates are more motivated and loyal, hiring them improves employee retention and saves your company from the high cost of repeat recruiting.

Key theme expanded:

Commitment, grit, and loyalty — that’s what your company gets when you hire Year Up graduates. On average, our graduates stay at companies two to three times longer than conventional hires — resulting in a significant competitive advantage given the high cost of recruitment, onboarding, and the damage done to employee morale due to turnover fatigue. Our graduates are eager to prove their value, make meaningful contributions, and show their worth. All these resilient young people desire is an opportunity. One chance to show what they can do. Their work ethic is rooted in the Year Up belief that success takes hard work. Year Up graduates don’t quit. They stick around. They commit. They go “all in” for the success of their team.

Key Message 4 — REDUCE YOUR HIRING RISK

Because we continuously adjust curriculum to your industry’s ongoing needs and offer corporate partners the ability to further shape the developing skills of student interns, Year Up is a less risky, more reliable way to build a pipeline of talent for your company.

Key theme expanded:

Competency matters more than credentials. So why base hiring on a piece of paper? Focus instead on building a strong, reliable pipeline of talent for your company’s current and future needs. Year Up is 6 times more effective than conventional recruitment sources at finding the talent hiring managers need. We stay ahead of the market, constantly tweaking and customizing our one-year curriculum to meet your industry’s most timely and specific job needs. We do that by engaging you and other experts in your industry in an on-going conversation, so we always teach only the most relevant and in-demand skill sets needed. Our students receive 21 weeks of intensive training in the job-specific skills your company needs most. That’s followed by a 6-month internship where you get to work with our students and see first-hand all they can do — providing guidance, honing skills, and giving feedback along the way. What’s more, even during the internship, our professional staff continues to provide its full support, so your supervisors won’t be left to manage the process (or its outcomes) alone. Remarkably, this strategy of end-to-end involvement of corporate partners results in a 90% employer satisfaction rating.

Key Message 5 — STAY NIMBLE AND PLAN FOR GROWTH

Year Up provides a competitive edge by helping companies address shorter-term hiring needs as well as long-term strategic business objectives.

Key theme expanded:

Over 250 leading corporations count on Year Up to support their short-term hiring needs and their long-term strategy for sourcing and developing talent. Your competitors may be among them. Year Up offers partners a reliable, flexible pipeline of well-trained, motivated young talent. This not only provides you with the kind of employees who quickly bring value to your company, it enables managers to coach interns to become the ideal hire, further reducing hiring risk. In addition, if your company needs to fill positions that require more experience, through our independent job placement organization (YUPRO), Year Up can help companies find incredible talent at all career stages. What's more, because our process is market-driven, Year Up enables growing corporations to respond faster and more effectively to ever-changing market demands. By engaging in ongoing collaboration with our corporate partners, Year Up is able to anticipate the ways evolving technology or markets might impact the skills your company will need in the future. Then, we work with community college partners and education experts to create and/or modify a one-year training curriculum designed expressly with your long-term business success in mind.

Key Message 6 — REAP THE REWARDS OF DARING TO THINK BIG

Year Up is a valuable partner that forward-thinking business leaders count on to achieve business goals, advance corporate social responsibility, and build their careers.

Key theme expanded:

Whether you are a business looking to stand out in a local market or a manager looking to make a name for yourself as an innovative, out-of-the-box thinker, Year Up can be an invaluable partner. One sure-fire way to get noticed in today's competitive business world — and at your company — is by daring to go against the grain, take initiative, and lead the pack. Traditional job placement and workforce development isn't working. If it were, America wouldn't have skills gap of 12 million jobs through 2025. But what also isn't working is a system that leaves over 5 million young adults without any chance for a living wage. We can do better. As thought leaders in workforce development, Year Up offers a more socially responsible way to grow your talent pipeline. Be the voice that champions change in your company and community. You'll give your company a powerful competitive advantage — and do a world of good along the way.

Key Message 7 — BENEFIT FROM OUR TRY-BEFORE-YOUR-HIRE PROGRAM

By hosting Year Up interns, corporate partners gain a valuable “try before you hire” sneak peek at potential future hires.

Key theme expanded:

Have you ever hired what you thought was the perfect candidate, only to find they didn't have *all the skills* or the right professionalism needed to do the job? It's frustrating, but the truth is, the best HR department in the world can't guarantee your next hire won't be a bust. But what if you could see a potential hire in action before you hired? *What if you knew your applicant was well prepared because you had a role in developing their training?* With the Year Up student internship, companies work *with* Year Up to train interns, giving you a huge measure of control over a process that is often unpredictable. Year Up is a more effective way to develop talent than conventional, outmoded forms of recruiting because we allow you to help us train our students to the skills you need — and offer you a valuable try-before-you-hire sneak peek at any potential new hire. What's more, we carefully match each intern with just the right internship, placing students with your company we think will have the greatest chance at success. By hosting a 6-month hands-on learning internship, you get the opportunity to work alongside our students, providing feedback, explaining expectations, and helping to shape their training to execute their developing skills in just the way your company needs. Perhaps, that's why 90% of our corporate partners would recommend Year Up to a colleague.

Key Message 8 — OUR SOFT SKILLS TRAINING MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

Year Up students receive daily instruction in the kind of important, professional soft skills that bring real value to your company.

Key theme expanded:

Any manager will tell you, unprofessional behavior is the primary obstacle to employee success and the number one reason managers decide to fire. An employee with a bad work ethic can be toxic to your team's morale and its ability to operate effectively. Conversely, employees who treat others professionally and bring enthusiasm to their work make everybody's work more enjoyable. That's why we train our students in the professional “soft” skills needed to thrive in the business world. Our corporate partners tell us that it is the mastery of these valuable skills that really set our interns and graduates apart. From *proper business communication* to *time management*, *problem solving* to *working well in a team* — the professional skills training our students receive makes them more well-rounded employees who bring real value to companies that hire them.