

Getting ready for a new stage

A case study about a university growing its downtown campus with a robust capital campaign.



Results

- Got all stakeholders aligned and working in coordination toward campaign milestones
- Increased brand awareness, in the academic community and in the community at large
- Raised over \$40M—the most successful capital campaign in the school's history

Opportunity

In one of the last phases of Point Park University's Academic Village expansion, the university undertook a major capital campaign to move the long-respected Pittsburgh Playhouse from Oakland to Point Park's downtown campus. This new state-of-the-art, LEED-certified facility is the expansion's crowning achievement. This effort needed a compelling and persuasive communications plan to generate support from a wide range of private and public donors.

Solution

ThoughtForm helped Point Park stakeholders align on the milestones for the campaign, from quiet phase to public launch to maintenance. Once a campaign calendar was in place, ThoughtForm created an identity for the campaign titled *Get Ready for a New Stage*. This new identity acted as a springboard for the campaign, including the development of creative and engaging campaign materials. At over \$40 million raised, *Get Ready for a New Stage* is the largest and most successful campaign for the university to date.

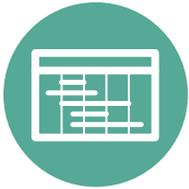


Point Park continues to benefit from ThoughtForm's great work. As the Academic Village took shape and the projects changed, ThoughtForm was right there with us every step of the way.



Mariann Geyer
Vice President for External Affairs,
Point Park University

What did we do?



Built a campaign toadmap to focus messaging and align stakeholder efforts.

Point Park stakeholders knew that a major campaign was needed to raise funds for the new Playhouse. And they asked if ThoughtForm could help align their team on a single, clear message and a process that would keep them in sync throughout the campaign.

ThoughtForm worked with the team to identify their target audiences and key messages. We then took that content and integrated it into a campaign calendar displaying all the important phases and milestones in the life of the campaign. Finally, we displayed the important communication channels and tools at each phase.

We turned the calendar into a poster, which the Point Park team used as a visual reference to guide them in their decision-making. It became a tangible and valuable representation of the campaign.



Created a campaign brand that captures the excitement of the changes to come.

Once ThoughtForm understood the timetable of the capital campaign, we focused on creating the campaign brand. This brand had to communicate a complex message: it would have to convey the physical move that was about to happen for the Playhouse, inspire the university community and donors to participate in the campaign, and resonate with the theme of *change* that the Academic Village initiative began over a decade ago.

Working with University President Paul Hennigan, Vice President for External Affairs Mariann Geyer, and their Point Park team, ThoughtForm was able to explore a number of names and logotypes before landing on one that the team felt was a true rally cry” for the university and best represented the intent of the campaign: *Get Ready for a New Stage*... a new stage of innovation, performance, theater, and more.



Executed the campaign with precision timing, consistency and quality.

ThoughtForm put the new brand to work right away. Our team created business papers for all campaign correspondence. We designed and produced streetscape graphics that displayed the message “Get Ready for a New Stage” and helped mark the physical area of the new Playhouse building.

ThoughtForm also produced two campaign brochures for Point Park. The first was a smaller, three-panel brochure to quickly communicate the campaign and jump-start the public phase of the campaign.

The second campaign brochure was for longer-term use and would serve as the core communication piece for the campaign from public launch to its later phases. This brochure embodied the campaign theme and was filled with testimonial spreads from people who are part of the Point Park family—from Point Park alumna Shirley Jones to Vice President and Artistic Director of the Conservatory Ronald Allan-Lindblom.

Who did we help?

Point Park University: a leader in liberal arts education

Located in downtown Pittsburgh, Point Park University is a liberal arts institution that for many years has been a shining example of a true urban campus. Every day, Point Park University students benefit from the unique relationship between the school and its city neighborhood. The Academic Village initiative is helping to develop a “multi-block living and learning hub” that transforms campus life for the students. It has revitalized the university’s connection to downtown businesses and cultural institutions.

Point Park University enrolls more than 3,800 full- and part-time students in 82 undergraduate programs and 18 doctoral-level graduate programs. These programs are offered through its four schools: Conservatory of Performing Arts, School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, and School of Communication.

What did we create?

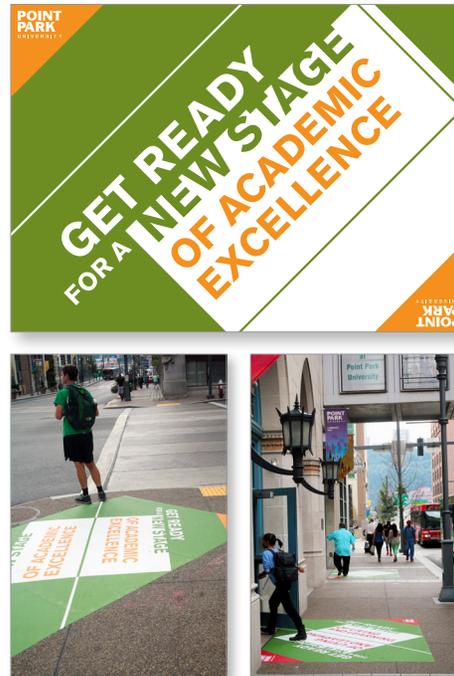
Campaign roadmap

The large-format calendar was used by Point Park as a visual roadmap of the campaign. It contained milestones, audiences, key messages, communication channels, and tools. It also graphically represented certain tasks along the timeline that were significant to the momentum of the campaign, like “Create a buzz!”



Brand identity applications

With the new brand identity finalized, ThoughtForm produced an art library that could be applied to a variety of media. One medium, exterior sidewalk clings, were designed to promote the campaign and mark the area of the new downtown Playhouse on Forbes Avenue. The clings were placed at additional sidewalk corners throughout the Academic Village with different types of “New Stages.” For instance: *Get Ready for a New Stage of Academic Excellence.*



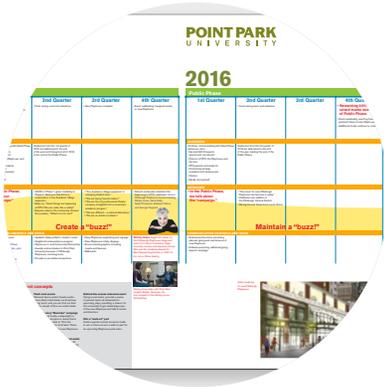
Campaign brochures

ThoughtForm produced a small-format (for short-term use) and large-format brochure for the campaign. The large-format brochure became the primary communications vehicle for the campaign. It conveyed the intent and goals of the campaign, and celebrated the stories of Point Park alumni, administration, and staff who were each asked, “What does *Get Ready for a New Stage* mean to you?”



How did we do it?

ThoughtForm collaborated directly with executive stakeholders to bring the campaign brand to life.



Developed a strategic campaign roadmap. Determined the best way to map out the phases and key events of the campaign. Compiled all of that information into a final calendar for easy reference.



Built a modular toolkit. Generated themes, messages, and logotypes that helped describe the intent and feeling of the capital campaign.



Won the board's support by designing and sharing a compelling presentation of the new campaign brand.



Discovered stories and images to identify locations and logistics for principal photography.



Captured beautiful images and stories. Created brochure messaging and photography to ensure that the key stories of the campaign were diverse, engaging to potential donors.



Executed a detailed production plan to schedule and produce all campaign communications in a timely manner and on budget.

ThoughtForm

ThoughtForm transforms ideas to connect people with actionable information. Working where strategy meets design, we help our clients turn fuzzy ideas, challenges, and opportunities into clear and meaningful messages and experiences. With ThoughtForm you can engage and inspire people, build their understanding, and enable them to take action.

ThoughtForm is a Pittsburgh-based design consultancy focused on visual communications. We work with leadership teams in organizations ranging from Fortune 100 companies to small nonprofits. Let us give your thoughts a visual form with the power to communicate.

To find out how our design solutions can help you contact Steve Frank at:

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To learn more, visit us at:

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