Assessment 3: Training Proposal

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Part One: Marketing Plan

The Plum Corporation is developing a "phablet" targeted to K-12 schools. Phablet, a portmanteau of "phone" and "tablet," is essentially a large-screen, Internet-enabled, "smart" telephone. Mobile phone size is typically four to five inches in length. E-readers and tablets range from seven to nine inches.

Most phablets are marketed to consumers, not the education sector. As of September 2013, Samsung reported that it sold over 10 million Galaxy Note phablets (Mattera, 2013). Market pressure from Samsung may force Apple to develop a large-size iPhone, phablet to compete in this nascent market. The Plum phablet seeks to be the only necessary mobile platform for all parties in education.

As mobile technology integration in K-12 schools grows deeper, barriers to widespread adoption increase. School staff (including teachers, support staff, and administrators), parents, and students can find themselves frustrated remembering different logins for the array of devices and applications used during any given day. School with older technologies can force staff to bring their own devices to the network. Students and other personnel may also add devices to school, further stressing the network infrastructure. Well-intentioned "bring your own device" (BYOD) policies can actually create more problems. For example, time may be spent a learning new applications that are specific to student hardware, rather than focusing on instruction. Some schools have a limited Internet infrastructure, especially those in countries with emerging economies. Furthermore, acceptable use policies (AUPs) can become quickly out-of-date as students and staff continue to add new and different mobile technologies, including e-readers and tablets.

The Plum One

Much of Plum's competitor profits come from the third-party software that runs on their proprietary platforms. Apple earns 30 cents from each dollar sold in its App Store. Because Apple vets all applications submitted to its App Store, consumers feel confident that their purchases are stable and virus-free. This system drives down the price to purchase a mobile device. Unfortunately, each closed platform creates an "ecosystem" that limits consumer access to applications. For example, Microsoft Office is only available on the Surface tablet and Windows phones. Another issue is the fragmentation of the user's experience. Android apps that run on large screen tablets may appear stretched, thus reducing the image resolution.

It is the Plum Corporation's belief that platform competition confuses consumers. The Plum phablet will transcend the definition of computer or smart phone by creating a device-neutral platform capable of running any and all applications, even those native to competing ecosystems. To exemplify the return to Internet openness, the new phablet will be called "Plum One."

The Plum One will feature a unique, proprietary application ("app") known as "Emulate." When launched, Emulate can run any application native to a competing mobile device. An Apple iOS, Google Android app, Windows phone, or even an Adobe Flash-based program, can run on the Plum One via Emulate. Emulate is the mobile equivalent of Parallels, which brings the Windows experience to Mac users.

Plum will also offer a mobile-based digital distribution system, known as the One Shop, to sell apps. Similar to Google Play, One Shop customers can sample applications before purchase. Via Emulate, Plum users will also have access to other online digital

distribution systems (e.g., Google Play and Apple's App Store). The Plum neutral

platform will give users an unprecedented marketplace of educational applications.

The Plum One will offer a simple solution to logins and social sharing. The One

Touch Identification System ("OneTouch") will be the single login for each of the

device's online gradebooks, learning management systems (LMS), and cloud-based

applications. The "OneMe" sharing button will synchronize to social outlets. OneMe is

a social media management system, similar to Hootsuite, the application that links

Twitter, Facebook, and other social media together. The OneMe system will have an

teacher, student, and a parent dashboard, each with different levels of privacy settings.

Typing with a physical keyboard is often desirable for long-term assignments,

including student writing, administrative observation reports, and other word processing

tasks. Detachable keyboards, however, are uncommon in the smart phone sector.

Adding this accessory to a tablet can cost consumers about $50. Including a free

keyboard cover with the Plum One would increase the perceived value of the product.

Plum seeks to market to One internationally. Competing phablets, such as the

Samsung Note, are especially popular countries such as South Korea, where Samsung

originates. While Apple may be dominant in American and European markets, it is not in

many Asia nations (Riley, 2013). Although many iPhones are assembled in China, Apple

has yet to overcome the country's regulatory hurdles. If Chinese reports are to be

believed, the government's China Mobile is servicing over 700 million subscribers, about

twice the total population of the United States (Riley, 2013). Integrating into Asian

markets, especially China, needs to be an immediate priority. Plum can accomplish this

by creating bureaus in China and by negotiating permission to add the Plum One to the China Mobile network.

Part Two: Training Strategies

It is Plum's view that communities of practice (COPs) should be organic and take a "grassroots" approach. Users and stakeholders should manage COPs. Exemplars of student work and lesson plans need to be cultivated and shared in the Plum community. Some of Plum's competitors, such as SMART Exchange, advertise a database of shared projects that feature many partially completed projects.

Advocates and Ambassadors

In a sense, technologies can transcend functionality as a tool and become part of one's daily life. Historically, technology companies relied on "technology advocates" to sell its message to both manufacturers and users. Plum will establish a corporate position, known as Chief Advocate and will pursue the consulting services of Guy Kawasaki, formerly from Apple during the early days of the Macintosh computer. The Chief Advocate will be tasked with maintaining the worldwide communities of practice that use the One phablet.

Plum's competitors train a network of users, sometimes known as product ambassadors. The goal is to align the goals of the technology company to the communities of practice. Apple Distinguished Educators (ADEs) are "ambassadors of innovation, participating in and presenting at education events around the world" ("Apple Distinguished Educators Program," 2013). The Google Teacher Academy educators are expected to "actively participate in the Google Certified Teacher Online Community" ("Google Teacher Academy," 2013). Microsoft offers an Innovative Educator Expert

(MIE Expert) program. MIE Experts are an "exclusive global community consists of visionary leaders and other forward thinking educators who work closely with Microsoft to lead innovation in education ("Microsoft Partners in Learning," 2013). SMART Certified Teachers learn on a unique platform, the SMART Learning Space. According to SMART Tech, training is "hosted on CoursePark – a social learning platform loaded with highly innovative interactive learning experiences" ("The SMART Certified Trainer," 2013). This network delivers self-directed instruction in a collaborative setting.

Plum desires to create a similar experience for its teacher-trainers. On a long-term basis, teacher-trainers can earn certificates. Similar to ADE, the Google Teacher Academy, MIE Experts, and SMART Certified Teachers, Plum will create a network of ambassadors, known as Plum One Excellent Teachers (POETs) to deliver its message. Google, Microsoft, Apple, and SMART focus on teachers, while ignoring other stakeholders. POETs will begin by training teachers and will then extend to all stakeholders, including parents, IT workers, librarians, administrative staff, instructional aides, school nurses, and students.

<center>Special Interest Groups</center>

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has a pre-existing infrastructure that meets Plum's needs, the special interest group for mobile learning (SIGML). Members include "teachers, administrators, technology coordinators, university faculty and researchers and representatives from for-profit and nonprofit entities, including the government" ("Special Interest Group for Mobile Learning," 2013). Recruiting SIGML members will enable Plum to tap into a network of credible experts.

Utilizing existing networks of special interest groups will enable Plum to reduce the barriers of acceptance among respected educators. SIGML leaders can lead the Plum One user groups, as well as host webinars. Topics can range from best practices, acceptable use policies, Internet safety, and professional development. SIGML has white papers available about mobile technology integration ("Special Interest Group for Mobile Learning," 2013). According to the SIGML website, current activities include:

- Supporting mobile device integration in different types of learning environments.
- Support includes access to SIG communication channels as well as expertise and professional development in the area of mobile learning integration in education
- Disseminating best practices and best practices research in the area of mobile learning and computing
- Creating effective research tools and methodologies
- Examining issues related to mobile technology integration, including (but not limited to) equity, the digital divide, acceptable use, safety, special needs students and English-as-a-second-language user issues
- Providing recommendations for the development of appropriate mobile learning tools (hardware and software and related curriculum for teaching and learning) ("Special Interest Group for Mobile Learning," 2013)

Plum will consult with the Mobile Learning Equity, an affiliate of SIGML. This organization seeks mobile "access and equity for every child" ("Mobile Learning Equity," 2013). In 2009, Mobile Equity Learning oversaw a successful 1:1 iPod Touch initiative at Culbreth Middle School, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. This was the first mobile deployment in America in a K-12 school ("Mobile Learning Equity," 2013).

<div align="center">Communities of Practice</div>

Plum will work with the American Society of Training and Development (ASTD), via its Communities of Practice blogs. Internationally, the ASTD has "over 4,000 members outside of the United States from more than 100 countries" and uses the LinkedIn professional social network to publicize its message ("American Society for Training and Development," 2013). The ASTD holds global conferences. Most recently,

a conference that in 2013 had "more than 9,000 attendees from over 80 countries ("American Society for Training and Development," 2013).

To reach a wide target audience, Plum will develop password-protected massive open online courses (MOOCs). Plum will host its proprietary MOOCs in the app "PlumU." By utilizing the Internet as a distribution model, PlumU MOOCs can teach an unlimited number of participants asynchronously, regardless of location in the world. Content will also be offered via Internet browser available on any computer, PC or Mac, thus making it easy to access to new users. The cost for each PlumU MOOC will be 99 cents. Paying a nominal fee can alleviate the large attrition rates that are often associated with passive learners who join MOOC classes. Upfront payment would serve to motivate MOOC students to complete coursework. Payment can be reimbursed by schools only upon proof of course completion. Course samples will also be produced to enable new users to sample content first.

An effective method for marketing the PlumU MOOCs, as well as the One device itself, would be display the device's functionality. Plum representatives and POETs will set-up a kiosk in each school that adopts the phablet. Similar to the Apple Store, sample Plum Ones will run the different applications that would appeal to each specific stakeholder. At this point, school-based POETs can introduce PlumU MOOCs. This strategy should bring novices to the MOOC learning format. POETs can arrange face-to-face interactions about PlumU coursework within each school. The Plum model of MOOCs and local personal learning communities (PLCs) widens the appeal of online learning.

PlumU will feature forums and PLCs divided by role in school setting. Educators have different needs than support staff and administrators. Teachers can use the device as a tool to consume and create content. The OneMe can publish and share student work and exemplars. Text message alerts can be synchronized to remind students of test and due dates. The mobility of phablets will enable instructional aides to work better with the student population. Aides can carry the device from class to class, as well as to each student. Training aides on educational technology will help the lead teacher, as well as the overall classroom environment. Plum features a virtual bookshelf and an e-bookstore. Textbook chapters can be easily added to student accounts, thus eliminating the problem of heavy book bags and ripped textbooks. Media specialists can sync e-books and electronic databases on student devices.

Administrators require training on teacher observation tools, methods to increase communication, and record keeping. Password-protected networks can enable administrators to keep track of student discipline reports and academic data. The school psychologist can create a system of badges to reward behavior. Badges can be awarded from teachers and principals to student and parent devices. The entire school community can communicate asynchronously via Plum's unified calendar.

Support staff can also benefit from the Plum One. An information technology (IT) specialist would require training in integrating Plum devices to school servers and wi-fi infrastructure, as well as methods to synchronize purchased applications. Custodians and groundskeepers can be trained in the GPS functionality in the Plum One, as well as the collaborative reporting features. School nurses can use a mobile device to issue medical alerts and communicate with other medical professionals. Nurses can

provide training on topics including blood borne pathogens, diabetes, and EpiPen administration.

Parents must also be included in PlumU training. Parent PLCs should be hosted in the evening and on weekends, when more parents are available. As an incentive, food should be served. Other parent enticements can include issuing a system of digital badges for participation, as well as a contest awarding gift cards to the Plum Shop. Plum will donate devices and funds to local, parent-managed charities, as well as to PTA functions. An educational grant system will be organized and will be managed locally, by participating school.

Technology ambassadorships, special interest groups, and PlumU will function as an infrastructure to deliver learning to all stakeholders. The goal is to create a functioning COP that transcends the device. The community, the Plum One features, including Emulate, OneMe, and OneTouch, each work together to create a simple-to-use and powerful phablet.

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