



MPower, Inc.

Communications Plan

MPower, Inc.
516 Expo Cir E
Stillwater, OK 74075

Created by:

Annie Schultheis
Mark Slette
Emily Sanderlin
Stephanie Rojo
Jennifer Schmolt
Jaelyn Krafsky

Introduction

A brief summary of our meetings with MPower:

- Meeting on Feb. 3, 2017:
 - To learn more about the nonprofit MPower, we met with Amy Spiva, who is MPower's executive director in order to discuss what the company was all about. In doing so, we gained a better picture of the communications methods that MPower uses to reach its markets and the community at large. From the information we learned at this meeting, we created our Communications Audit that demonstrated MPower's position in the market and community. With our Communications Audit, we defined MPower's climate in communications, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and goals that we recommended for MPower. We provided the tools to reach the maximum amount of people it can, and help spread MPower's message to the surrounding community and its potential client base.
- Meeting on March 27, 2017:
 - After we presented our Communications Audit, we soon began to brainstorm ideas regarding what MPower's Communications Plan would entail. Once we established a firm action plan, we met with Amy to showcase our ideas and all that we learned from the Communications Audit. We discussed in depth of what could be feasible applications of MPower's resources and efforts. This second meeting was a vital stepping stone in order to create this Communications Plan, since we have a better grasp of exactly what could assist MPower in becoming a more communicative and efficient organization.

From these meetings, we have configured a Communications Plan that we think will be quite beneficial to MPower. We hope by providing various communications tools to the organization, it will expend some of its resources in order to reach its target audience more frequently and effectively.

Background

MPower is a nonprofit that was founded in 1969 that is dedicated to helping people with various disabilities lead normal lives. They help find jobs for their nonresidential vocational clients, and provide a variety of services for their residential clients.

Our plan for MPower is for them to establish themselves as a solid presence in Stillwater and the greater Payne County area through community involvement.

Goals

1. Have a completed, fully-functional website.
2. Social media (specifically Twitter, Instagram and Facebook) to exist and be continuously updated.

3. Have a steady stream of millennial staff and volunteers to keep MPower current and knowledgeable on what is going on in the surrounding areas.

4. To be active in local events such as Lights on Stillwater and the Homecoming walk around.

Audiences of Plan

- Current/potential clients
- Employees
- Stakeholders
- Stillwater community
- High school students
- College students
- Potential volunteers or interns
- Federal, regional and local governments
- The media

Key Messages & Themes

To draw on research from our Communication Audit, MPower's mission statement is:

- "MPower, formerly known as the Sheltered Workshop for Payne County, (SWPC), was established in 1969 to provide services to individuals in Payne County with developmental disabilities. MPower provides a supportive environment for comprehensive employment, job training and placement, and residential services."
- From this, MPower clearly defines its services and goals, which demonstrates its recurring theme of providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

From our Communications Audit, we conducted a SWOT analysis of MPower and below is a summary of our findings:

- Strengths:
 - MPower is a great organization with a great cause
 - It has a large staff of over 70 employees
 - Effectively reaches out to a younger target audience by going to school functions
 - Is the primary recipient of Stillwater High School's SMAC Week, which raises a substantial amount of money for the nonprofit SMAC chooses to benefit
- Weaknesses:
 - MPower's website is still not up and running as of March 2017
 - It has a Facebook page that is not updated on a regular basis
 - No Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
- Opportunities:
 - Creating an internship opportunity for a sophomore/junior in college
 - Creating a specific social media/communications position so various tasks do not fall through the cracks of the organization

- To connect with churches and their volunteer programs
- Threats:
 - Nonprofits are always vulnerable to economic crises
 - Another threat prevalent to nonprofits is too much competition from other nonprofits that are working for the same purpose, which makes it harder for people to choose which one to donate to
 - Has a main competitor - SCL (Supported Community Lifestyles)

The SWOT analysis shows a common theme that is pertinent to MPower: there is always room for improvement. MPower has a limited amount of funds, so it is difficult for MPower to expend its scarce resources on certain aspects that some may think are not critical to the organization's success, such as marketing or communications. Some may deem marketing or communications as an unnecessary expenditure, but in reality, they are vital to an organization's success.

All in all, MPower's message is that it provides services to individuals in Payne County with developmental disabilities. MPower's purpose is to provide a supportive environment to its clients in order to train them for future employment opportunities later in life.

Stakeholder Analysis

MPower has two main stakeholders or regular donors, United Way and Elite Repeat. They are the two biggest donors for the organization. This year, Stillwater High School's SMAC week will act as a main donor.

Elite Repeat:

- They are a resale shop located in downtown Stillwater.
 - Sell used, recycled and upcycled items
- They run their business strictly using volunteers
- The money made from sales goes to area non-profits

United Way:

- One MPower board member is also on board for United Way
- MPower is an umbrella organization of the United Way
 - However, each entity has its own board and is run independently
 - United Way has many different boards that are in charge of different issues
- Organization goes to the United Way allocations board for money
 - This is the board that MPower deals with the most

Stillwater Makes A Change Week (SMAC):

- Their donation will help them begin construction/lease of a new facility
- Their involvement has helped MPower promote and gain many new individual donors

MPower values these donors and makes sure to keep them in touch with what is going on in the organization. The stakeholders also get sent a report of how the money they donated was used.

Communication Analysis

Social media, website & community presence:

- MPower currently does not have a strong online or community presence. They do not have any social media accounts other than Facebook at the moment and they are in the process of creating a new website. In a previous survey of 99 people, the majority had never heard of MPower.

Plan/goals:

- Revamp the Facebook page and update photos
- Create a Twitter and Instagram account to be taken over by a student intern, to-be hired
- Have the intern take photos every opportunity they can to help with MPower's online image and presence
- MPower clients and workers volunteer in the community to get their name out
- Have the new website up and running ASAP

Target audience:

- High school & college students
- Adults in Stillwater or the surrounding area
- Persons with potential time to volunteer
- Potential clients with developmental disabilities

Topics of conversation on social media:

- Upcoming events, fundraisers, etc...
- Spotlight on certain clients
- Volunteer opportunities for students, high school & college

Facebook:

- Create a post one month, one week, two days before and the day of an event
- Update photos
- One post per week
- 100 followers in the first month

Instagram:

- Post approx. 1 photo per week but strive for more
- 200 followers in the first month

Twitter:

- Post approx. 2-3 times per week
- 200 followers in the first month

Action Plan

Baseline for communication:

MPOWER's overall issues with their communication with the public are their lack of planning and lack of personnel to do the posting and promotions. With an MPOWER communications intern, the organization can constantly promote different events happening with clients and with volunteers.

The current Facebook page has 209 likes and posts every few weeks. MPOWER has posted and shared post on their Facebook page more often in the past few days due to the participation in Stillwater high school's week-long fundraiser. Stillwater Makes A Change (SMAC) has been raising money to benefit MPOWER, so the facebook page is keeping followers updated on events happening with SMAC Week. These posts are very effective and more should continue to be posted regularly for upcoming events.

The Instagram and Twitter will be developed as soon as possible. These social media platforms will be used to spread awareness to volunteers as well as donors. Posts will be made with pictures from clients every day jobs as well as pictures from fundraising events. Specific clients could be featured on social media and posts could explain what they do with their everyday jobs. Other MPOWER employees could be featured as well as volunteers.

Currently, most of the internal communication is done by word of mouth and email. There are 75 staff members to contact and we suggest implementing a mass text messaging system, like GroupMe or a "no-reply" text messaging system could give their organization a quick and easy way to update and effectively communicate with their employees.

Stakeholders are contacted after donations are made with a report of where their money was used at MPOWER. Individual donors receive a monthly letter that updates them on MPOWER's progress and recent activities.

Intermediary Goals (2-3 Months):

In the next two to three months, MPOWER should hire and train a communications intern. This intern should meet directly with Amy, director of MPOWER and learn about the brand of the company. Amy spoke on how she usually just does the social media postings herself because of a certain look she wants MPOWER to have. This intern should study Amy's opinions and implement them in everything.

After the torch is passed on, the intern should set up a hootsuite account and plan weekly posts on facebook, twitter, and instagram. There should not be a few days going by where followers do not hear from MPower.

To obtain the follower goals, ask current followers to retweet or share posts do more people see them that are not yet following MPower on social media. In addition, when volunteers come, have them check in on facebook as their first task. If they begin to advertise where they are volunteering their time, their facebook friends will be connected with their facebook page.

MPower should have a goal to launch the website by May 1. This project is put off and needs to be finished in order to start new projects. A deadline will ensure progress on the website.

Create more promotional videos that adhere to people's emotions and provide entertainment on social media. As well as share the current SMAC Week video and set a goal of 1,000 views in 2 months.

End Year Goal (after one year):

After one year, there should be a consistent job specifically for MPower communications and public relations, whether it is still an internship or a full-time job, someone should be entirely in charge of developing the brand.

If there is a change in location, even more advertising of this move should be implementing in social media, the Stillwater Press, as well as surrounding news stations. The goal should be never to question MPower's location.

Key Dates

Every day is an important day to MPower. Each day, MPower's clients become more and more knowledgeable or experienced with their job training and placement, whether if they currently have one or are currently pursuing one.

MPower will be the main beneficiary of SMAC week, making March 25-31, 2017, a very important week for the organization. SMAC week raises thousands of dollars each year, which is very exciting for MPower. MPower can use the funds raised from SMAC week and utilize the money to its full extent, which hopefully means investing more in its marketing and communications.

Timetable of Projects (2017)

This timetable reiterates our communication analysis. We have provided a timetable below that roughly outlines what projects will be accomplished and when, on a monthly and weekly basis.

On a monthly basis:

- April through May:
 - Get the website to be fully functional, interactive and live
 - Create Twitter and Instagram accounts; have 200 followers of each account by the end of April
 - Have at least 100 Facebook followers by the end of April
 - Frequently update all forms of social media
 - Create an communications/social media internship position and post on hireOSUgrads.com
- May through August:
 - Frequently update all forms of social media
 - Hire a communications/social media intern for the summer - have the intern take photos every opportunity they can to help with MPower's online image and presence
 - Continue to increase follower counts on all forms of social media
 - Integrate the new MPower brand across all media platforms in order to have a consistent image
- August through December:
 - Frequently update all forms of social media
 - Have over 500 followers on all social medias including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by the end of the calendar year
 - Possibly hire another communications/social intern for the fall semester

On a weekly basis:

- Facebook:
 - Create a post one month, one week, two days before and the day of an event
 - One post per week
- Twitter:
 - Post approx. 2-3 times per week
- Instagram:
 - Post approx. 1 photo per week but strive for more

Assessment & Evaluation

The purpose of this Communications Plan is to help MPower create a clear purpose within the organization in order for it to effectively reach its intended target audience. By providing MPower with strong and achievable end goals, we have demonstrated that it is possible for this organization to be more successful with its marketing and communications.

A marketing/communications evaluation may be necessary at the end of this calendar year (2017) in order to measure the success of this plan. We can conduct surveys in order to gauge if MPower has reached a larger target audience than where it was when we conducted our first survey. For example, from our first SurveyMonkey results, over 77 percent of the survey participants were not at all familiar with MPower or its purpose. Hopefully with this plan we

can lower that percentage by reaching more and more people, and increase MPower's brand awareness and effectiveness.