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Recommended Citation

Mackenzie, Maureen L. Ph.D. and Guzman, Gabriela MBA, "Marketing Social Responsibility: MBA Capstone that Leads to Social Good" (2016). *Faculty Works: Business*. 23.

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Marketing Social Responsibility: MBA Capstone that Leads to Social Good

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ABSTRACT

This paper emerges from a series of articles that have been presented at the NBEA Annual Conference over the past few years. The pedagogical philosophy is that business students should experience working with a real-world client prior to earning the MBA Degree. The mission of the institution establishes the founding belief in social responsibility, service, community, and study. The college's commitment to academic excellence and the promotion of lifelong learning demonstrates the transformative education experienced by the students. As a result, the evidence of learning for the MBA program is a set of solution-driven recommendations that will lead to social good.

This paper focuses on the consulting work performed for the *Health and Welfare Council of Long Island (HWCLI)*. The student consultants were charged with recommending a set of solutions that would increase the number of individual members as well as increase the revenue to HWCLI.

Keywords

Health and welfare, marketing, nonprofit, social entrepreneurship

1 PEDOGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Molloy College designs its MBA program to provide an educational journey for the student that not only prepares the future leader for his or her professional path, but also for participation as a socially responsible citizen. Our students understand that the collective must serve the needs of the larger society. The student's journey provides not only skills and knowledge, but a disposition that serves society.

Through transformative education, Molloy College promotes a lifelong search for truth and the development of ethical leadership (Molloy College Mission Statement). Back in 2012 Civic Engagement was established as the annual theme. This is when the MBA capstone course was redesigned to integrate social responsibility with the student learning objectives. A capstone, by its nature, is that last stone put in place; it shows the world that the building is complete. The capstone course is therefore intended to provide the students with an opportunity to demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and disposition that have been gained as a result of the business education.

The 2016 MBA Capstone Class was divided into four consulting teams serving two clients. This paper reports on

the work product created by the students under the consulting team name of, "*Strong Island Consulting*." Each team used the Bloomberg Philanthropies, "Mayor's Challenge" application to guide the consulting process. This process takes the students through four stages: (1) establishing a solution-driven vision, (2) developing a turnkey implementation plan, (3) determining the impact of the plan, and (4) determining if the solution can be replicated.

2 THE CONSULTING PROBLEM

Each client works with the Dean of the Business Division to identify the consulting problem for the students. The *Health and Welfare Council of Long Island* identified the following: The need to develop an individual membership campaign. Currently, the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island (HWCLI) has successfully developed and marketed an agency and organizational membership. The problem is that the HWCLI has not been as successful with developing an individual membership campaign. While HWCLI's mission is to serve those most vulnerable and at-risk on Long Island, its efforts benefit all Long Islanders. Everyone wants to be part of a thriving, vibrant region—where every individual has access to the supports and services that allow them to reach self-sufficiency and sustainability. By having a much more robust individual membership campaign and participation, HWCLI can have a much larger groundswell of Long Islanders committed to those most vulnerable and at-risk. Individual memberships also provide flexibility with the funds to support a variety of programs.

The student consultants conducted original research (IRB approved) to better understand what makes an individual donate. The results of this research provided a path upon which the students developed their recommendations.

The students use a version of the Bloomberg Philanthropies Challenge process to guide its work. The stages that lead the students to the set of solutions started with the vision.

3 THE VISION

While the Health & Welfare Council of Long Island has successfully gained agency and organizational memberships, the organization has not been as successful with acquiring individual memberships. HWCLI is hoping to increase its current membership dues from \$50K to \$100K. Membership dues are critical in funding issues that impact Long Island's most at-risk and vulnerable communities. The students on "Strong Island Consulting" had a vision that would lead to

an increase in recognition for the organization and would create a recurring donor base. In order to carry out its vision, the students on “Strong Island Consulting” designed an awareness campaign that would include a fundraising event hosted in Suffolk County.

4 THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Awareness Campaign

An integrated marketing and awareness campaign will focus on building awareness within poor and vulnerable communities in Long Island. The students classified the population into generations. By following a demographic structure, the team proposed different marketing strategies appropriate to each group. The generations considered are: baby boomers, generation X and millennial.

Baby Boomers—Fundraising Event

The team recommended that HWCLI host an event to showcase its mission and past successes. The desired outcome is to retain current members and to attract new members. The event will have a well-rounded program consisting of selected speakers and testimonials from individuals that have benefited from the good work emerging from HWCLI. Also, opportunities to network will be established. These new membership campaigns will help educate Long Island about the HWCLI and its positive impact on the local community.

Generation X—Givegab

Givegab is an application that connects approximately 400,000 nonprofit organizations, a third of all the nonprofits in the U.S. It connects NPO’s with volunteers, and more importantly, donors. The platform is available online and for mobile devices, making it a great tool and resource. GiveGab will help to raise awareness for HWCLI’s cause(s) and spread its mission while also increasing donations or “community investments”. “Strong Island Consulting” recommends that HWCLI establish an account and begin to actively engage in this online community.

Millennial—Welzoo

“Strong Island Consulting” recommended that HWCLI begin to use the website Welzoo. It has the potential to generate donations and may increase awareness of the good work of the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island. Welzoo is a website that allows users to support the HWCLI on a daily basis, with ease. An individual chooses HWCLI as his or her favorite organization, makes Welzoo.com his or her homepage, and each time the person goes online, Welzoo donates to the targeted organization.

Digital Focus

“Strong Island Consulting” will design a fundraising event and a supplemental donation programs on a digital platform. In order to appeal to all generations, the student consultants recommended an awareness campaign, using the organization’s interlocking strategy. This strategy creates a focus on Long Island’s most at-risk and vulnerable communities through: member engagement, coalition coordination and convening, advocacy, and meeting community needs. The student consultants recommended

that the client simplify the content on its website and current marketing campaign. HWCLI should utilize e-newsletters to demonstrate how the donor has made an impact in the community including real-life testimonials.

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The recommendations presented in this conference paper promote the mission of the *Health and Welfare Council of Long Island*, which is to address serious social and economic problems in the community. The nonprofit focuses on advocacy and the support of the at-risk and vulnerable citizens residing on Long Island. Through the implantation of the awareness campaign, it is the hope of the student consultants that the client will receive significant donations to continue its successful mission of helping Long Islanders survive his or her hardships.

The collective recommendations presented here will enhance the client’s engagement with the public. GiveGab and Welzoo are interactive channels that will consistently reach out to the public in an effective and efficient manner. For example, GiveGab creates accountability for dollars donated to specific causes through targeted campaigns. GiveGab promotions can specifically target a cause people believe in, such as childhood education, and supporters of that movement can donate directly to that cause.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to thank our partners at The Health and Welfare Council of Long Island for allowing us to demonstrate that our skills can be used to better the lives of Long Islanders. This consulting project has helped us to broaden our view of the needs of Long Islanders.

We also wish to acknowledge the team members of “Strong Island Consulting” who were unable to participate in the NBEA Conference, but were the heart of the original consulting project. Thank you: Laura Kaspszak, Joe Veneroni, and Chris Rupolo

REFERENCES

Will be supplied upon request.