

Molloy College

DigitalCommons@Molloy

---

Faculty Works: Business

---

11-12-2020

## Agents of Change - Continuing a Legacy

Kristen Callahan

Jacob Plaut

Jessica Strauber

Dawn DiStefano MBA, PhD

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.molloy.edu/bus\\_fac](https://digitalcommons.molloy.edu/bus_fac)



Part of the [Business Commons](#)

DigitalCommons@Molloy Feedback

---

# Agents of Change – Continuing A Legacy

**Kristen Callahan**

Molloy College  
1000 Hempstead Avenue  
Rockville Centre, NY 11571  
(516) 317-0832  
kcallahan2@lions.molloy.edu

**Jacob Plaut**

Molloy College  
1000 Hempstead Avenue  
Rockville Centre, NY 11571  
(646) 544-7799  
jplaut@lions.molloy.edu

**Jessica Strauber**

Molloy College  
1000 Hempstead Avenue  
Rockville Centre, NY 11571  
(516) 426-3134  
jstrauber1@lions.molloy.edu

**Dr. Dawn DiStefano**

Molloy College  
1000 Hempstead Avenue  
Rockville Centre, NY 11571  
(631) 365-6529  
ddistefano@molloy.edu

**ABSTRACT**

Students throughout their academic journeys become agents of change when they experience transformational learning. The students at Molloy College in conjunction with local non-profits have partnered to advance society with their field research. While the mission is fascinating for the assigned non-profit, what is truly amazing is how the capstone course shapes our students to become good citizens in our society. There are overarching rewards for all parties involved whether it be the students, faculty, members of the non-profit, and our community at large.

Three consulting teams are created to address the most relatable charges to the assigned non-profit. However, what is truly happening behind the scenes is our students search for truth through their research while positively impacting this organization. If guided successfully, the three consulting teams actually build off of one another's charges creating causational marketing plans that will assist the Board of this non-profit sustain incremental growth over time.

These turnkey recommendations that are presented not only help to build the Foundation where future research could develop, but allows the students to become personally invested in this organization's future. This promotes community and the building blocks of well-rounded young professionals upon graduation of their chosen degrees.

**Keywords**

Non-profit, building tributes, viral marketing, social responsibility, digital fundraising, marketing

**1 PEDOGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY**

There is no question that the faculty of Molloy want to have a hand in shaping future generations toward a better tomorrow and help develop good citizens of our community. The beautiful thing about this capstone experience is that we as faculty continue to learn from our students. Watching them transform into young professionals over their academic journeys is truly rewarding for us because they become the sought-out young adults of tomorrow.

The Spring 2020 semester Capstone Class proved to be an extraordinary group of students due to our current circumstances with the global pandemic. This paper captures the essence of this semester's project where the students displayed the utmost commitment to complete their obligations to their client (e.g. non-profit) and complete the course. The members of "Apex Consulting, Inc." used the Bloomberg Philanthropies, "Mayor's Challenge" application to guide the consulting experience.

**2 THE CONSULTING PROBLEM**

The client is the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation*. This non-profit was created in memory of a youth gone too soon. The organization's primary goal is to teach everyone 'because nice matters' and being good to one another can go a long way and perhaps save lives in the future. Ryan had many attributes that made his story worth telling and our students were successful at doing so with twenty-first century technology and the participation of the Founder of the non-profit along with additional family and friends dear to Ryan. The Founder of the organization served as the direct client for the student consulting teams.

Since inception, the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* has increased its brand awareness within its local community via more traditional forms of marketing. This capstone consulting firm has managed to spread Ryan's story via digital and causational marketing tactics bringing this non-profit to another level that could potentially expand around the world.

In order to maintain sustainable growth, the students have since committed to work voluntarily to help move the organization and its work forward. Through their research, they have gained a true understanding of who Ryan really was and want to continue to keep Ryan's legacy alive.

### 3 THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **St. Anthony's Fundraiser – Hawaiian Night.**

We plan to implement this idea by selling foundation merchandise and taking photographs for marketing purposes at the St. Anthony's High School Hawaiian Night Basketball event. Ryan attended St. Anthony's and to commemorate his life, the School has partnered with the Foundation to award annual scholarships to students who emulate Ryan's characteristics. The reason that Hawaiian Night was agreed upon between the two partners is because Ryan had a love for the beach, water, and was known to wear Hawaiian shirts.

- **Venmo Donation Boards – Celebrating Ryan.**

While working with the Board of the Foundation we have found that Ryan played soccer (e.g. even abroad) for his entire youth while frequenting the beach and boating on the ocean. We plan on creating three types of Venmo Donation Boards that mirror Ryan's hobbies. These donation boards will be used to increase funding toward student scholarships as well as toward future charitable events. Depending on the demographic we are utilizing several platforms to maximize donations (e.g. FaceBook and Instagram). This process can easily be repeated on a quarterly basis and/or a semi-annual basis toward incremental donations.

- **Online Interviews with Family and Friends.**

This is where the transformation really took place for the students. The Founder welcomed the students to conduct in-person interviews with close family and friends right before the national pandemic hit our area. They then pivoted by creating these online video interviews to be posted across various social media platforms as well as the Foundation's website. The surge of views, likes, and brand awareness significantly peaked within a few weeks. The client could not be more pleased with how this consulting team rose to the occasion and made Ryan's legacy a reality for all to see and embrace during very uncertain times. The interviews were emotional yet powerful. The analytics behind the message are clear, this would help sustain future growth for the Foundation if additional video content is created over time that provides an emotional appeal as this one did in memory of Ryan.

### 4 FACTORS THAT COULD DERAIL THE PLAN

There are many risk factors that became apparent with our research, including a global pandemic (later in the semester). Initially, our thought was potential scheduling conflicts associated with the interviews. We realize that people have very busy lives (including us), and it became evident that we needed to schedule in advance to make our idea come to fruition.

Another issue that might have become a reality if not planned accordingly would be the quality of the interviews. Since our consulting team did not know the participants who agreed to be interviewed directly, there was inherent risk in asking the wrong questions and not being able to bring that emotional appeal to the table. In order to mitigate this risk, we researched video content of other non-profits to better understand storytelling and how this marketing tactic would positively impact the organization and its audience.

A third risk that we may encounter is the lack of donations to our Venmo Boards. We have decided to create vertical videos for individuals to post their story prior to the Venmo Board release. This will help the individuals to become familiar with the organization without having to visit the Foundation's website or social media page. There will also be live edits to donations made to promote viewers to increase their donations.

Although these are some prominent risk factors, we were confident that we would pull through and complete our charge, even with the global pandemic. With sound research and a continued commitment among our teammates and our client, we planned to exceed expectations for the greater good.

### 5 SUMMARY OF DESIRED OUTCOMES

Our main objective is to enhance the overall engagement with the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* and at the same time continue to generate donations to support student scholarships. The Foundation is built on Ryan's most notable characteristics, all which have been identified throughout our work. Our implementation of these three ideas really exemplifies the Foundation's motto of 'because nice matters' and we believe that Ryan's legacy will continue to live on. It is our hope that the work we have done will have a lasting impact on the Foundation for generations to come.

### 6 IMPACT ON SOCIETY

There is a need for this solution around the world, especially with recent circumstances. The overarching idea is to spread societal change starting in our own communities and expanding worldwide. Through ongoing stewardship and society building on one

another's generosity and kindness, we can move forward the mission of this reputable organization while changing as individuals for the better.

Apex Consulting, Inc. wishes to make a positive impact. We are grateful for having the opportunity to partner with the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* and believe that our collective efforts will be noticed and provide the foundation to incorporate twenty-first century marketing tools to enhance this brand. It is our hope that other non-profits will be able to replicate our efforts toward social good.

#### **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.**

We wish to thank our partners at the *Ryan Mullen Strive For Five Charitable Foundation* for allowing us to get to know Ryan and we will be forever grateful for this rewarding opportunity.

#### **8 REFERENCES**

Will be supplied upon request.