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Oregon Supported Living Program Arts & Culture Marketing Suggestions

In what follows, we have analyzed OSLP Arts & Culture to further understand the strengths and challenges of this organization. With this information, we have developed three marketing approaches to enhance OSLP A&C and assist them in presenting an authentic, impactful presence in the community. In each approach, we provide a measurable objective, strategies to achieve this objective, and evaluation methods.

*Background:*

**​**

**OSLP Mission:** The mission of Oregon Supported Living Program is to enhance the lives of adults with developmental disabilities by providing person-centered residential, vocational, and supported living programs with an emphasis on the arts and community integration.

**Arts & Culture Mission**: ​The OSLP Arts & Culture Program breaks down barriers to participation in the arts for people of all abilities and builds bridges to a more diverse and inclusive community.

History: OLSP began in 1978 under the vision of Dan Close and Valerie Taylor from the University of Oregon. The journey began with an emphasis on a semi-independent living program. It then expanded to serve more complex disabilities.

Programs: Residential, Supported Living, Community Inclusion & Employment, Arts & Culture

*Stated Needs/Goals/Challenges:*

1.- Create a formal marketing plan

2.- Rebranding for consistency (fewer text-heavy materials)

3.- Reaching out more to donors (quality vs. quantity), sponsors, and business partners

4.- Break away from the disability stigma and include other “day-timers” (stay-at-home moms, students, retirees, etc.)

5.- More emotional appeal in their marketing

6.- General sustainability, potentially becoming a separate community arts center

7.- Increased evening and weekend programming

*Mini SWOC on Arts & Culture:*

Mission: ​The OSLP Arts & Culture Program breaks down barriers to participation in the arts for people of all abilities and builds bridges to a more diverse and inclusive community.

**Strengths**: Multidisciplinary: open studio, several partnerships (MECCA, OCT, Oregon Country Fair, Eugene Yoga, Family Karate Center Lane Arts, ect.), inclusive, professional instructors and materials, gallery space to show and sell work, diverse settings to provide new experiences, class pricing is accessible for most participants

**Weakness**: Unsustainable practices, underpriced classes, funding several spaces, marketing materials are inconsistent and dense, scheduling conflicts for those on a 9-5 schedule (2 pm classes), no fundraising campaign, no marketing plan

**Opportunities:** Develop more partnerships (public library- better utilize artistic services), utilize gallery space (rent out), hire more staff to support more classes (flex hours), donor based events, events catering to elderly/stay-at-home-moms/students, hire engagement during ArtWalk

**Challenges:** There is a disconnect between their identity in the community and what they want, reaching the needs of the community as a whole when scheduling, limited FTE, arts & culture is one of many programs, managing several spaces, finding people to fill their wide variety of programming (teachers and participants)

*Current Marketing Strategies:*

Social: Facebook, email, digital newsletter, website, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram (dormant)

Printed: Business cards featuring artwork, pamphlets, posters, flyers, postcards

*Recommended Marketing Strategies:*

1.- Cross-promotion with partner organizations/venues

2.- Emotional Marketing: Grow their social media presence, especially on Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube (as a tool to provide videos on other platforms/profiles)

3. Content marketing - refocus content on impact

*Desired outcomes/evaluation, summary of recommendations*

**Cross-Promotion**

The general purpose of cross-promotion is for OSLP to expand their community partnerships. This includes both growing existing relationships with existing partners and finding opportunities to engage with other organizations. With existing partners, this strategy is about finding new ways the two organizations can collaborate and about growing their commitment to the partnership. In finding new partners, the goal is finding a unique need or goal in both organizations that a collaboration could meet. The overall objective of increasing cross promotion, specifically in marketing, is to make sure that OSLP’s work is represented in partners’ relevant marketing materials. This can include general information about OSLP, advertisements for events and classes, and details about the specific partnership between the organizations. What gets promoted will be unique with each organization and there should be open communication about specific marketing strategies. Partner organizations will reach different demographics than OSLP’s traditional audience, increasing the overall awareness of OSLP’s Arts & Culture Program as well as increasing the diversity of participants and volunteers. It is also important to remember that cross-promotion is a two-way street. OSLP should find ways to represent their partner organizations and how they collaborate on programs more prominently in their marketing as well. This will deepen each partner organization’s investment in OSLP and encourage them to look for new opportunities to work together. It is also an incredibly cost-effective way of reaching new audiences and spreading awareness. If OSLP chooses to implement this strategy, OSLP should have at least two new partner organizations that they regularly cross-promote with by the end of 2017. To make sure this goal is reached, we have four main recommendations:

1. Reach out to current partners about more opportunities to collaborate on programming.
2. Develop partnerships with new local organizations.
3. Put out flyers and business cards for partner organizations in the OSLP offices and gallery.
4. Share these organizations’ social media posts on the OSLP pages.

New opportunities to collaborate with existing partners can include a variety of projects. For example, Kiva can supply food for culinary classes or offer discounts to anyone participating in an OSLP culinary class. The discount strategy could be more broadly applied to include tickets at Oregon Contemporary Theatre or admission to classes at Eugene Yoga. Similar creativity can be found in new partnerships as well. If Kiva cannot offer food, maybe a different grocery store can. It may even be worth it to talk to local restaurants about food supplies, hire new instructors, or get OSLP students access to a commercial kitchen. Similarly, OCT is not the only theatre company in town. OSLP can also approach other companies like Free Shakespeare in the Park or Actors’ Cabaret about either expanding your drama class offerings or maybe finding internship opportunities for OSLP participants. Eugene also has a wide range of art galleries, shops, fitness studios, and more that OSLP could approach about new opportunities.

Keeping the focus on marketing, it also important to remember that these partner organizations should be featuring these collaborations with OSLP in their marketing as well. To make sure the partner organizations are also benefiting from the collaborations, it is important that OSLP includes them prominently in their marketing materials as well. This includes helping distribute marketing materials for the organizations as well as including them on the OSLP website and any relevant printed materials. Social media is a great way for both organizations to promote each other without a lot of additional resources.

There are two main ways to evaluate the success of cross-promotion:

1. Survey where new participants learned about a particular class or program and how many OSLP members attend events at partner organizations.
2. Analyze social media interactions between OSLP and individual partner organizations (event advertisement, tags, shares, likes, etc.).

A participant survey can be either formal or informal. If OSLP would like hard statistics to show partners, they could distribute either physical or online surveys to participants and volunteers. These surveys should ask both how they heard about OSLP’s Arts & Culture Program and the specific event or class, whether or not they are familiar with the partner organization for that event or class, and whether or not that have attended or will attend events at the partner organization. The same questions can be asked anecdotally throughout the event. Partner organizations can also ask the same information of their audience. Another easy way to track increased participation for both organizations is through social media. This would be a quantitative analysis of likes, shares, tags, and more on each organization’s page. The goal would be to find an increased overlap in who is following and engaging with both organizations’ page. Social media analytics can be acquired through reports provided by the website or through an in-house or contracted analysis. This information should be reviewed as much as possible with partner organizations. The data social media can provide is a great way to show partner organizations and potential funders hard numbers on how cross-promotion has been beneficial.

**Emotional Marketing**

OSLP can and should capitalize on the compassionate and heartwarming stories of their members. These narratives will be impact-based and will convey why people chose OSLP over another organization. By telling the stories of OSLP members, the organization can appeal to viewers’ emotions to increase likes, shares, clicks, and general traffic to social media and from social media to their website and physical spaces. A measurable objective for OSLP A&C is: from July 2017 to July 2020, feature one OSLP artist each month, and obtain 70 likes, ten shares, and 100 clicks across the platforms of Facebook, Instagram, and Youtube. Additionally, each post should produce at least 200 impressions and a reach of 150 within 30 days of the posting. This objective will last three years, at which point OSLP can decide whether or not to continue the strategy.

To reach this objective, OSLP can pull from their website’s section on featured artists. This endeavor also shares the work and impact of OSLP Arts and Culture in the lives of these individuals. After identifying a featured artist each month, OSLP can post a picture or video along with a short biography of the artist. This biography can include what drew them to OSLP and most importantly, the impact that it has had on their lives. OSLP currently has a similar system in place on their website that features photos of OSLP artists with biographies and some examples of their artwork. This reservoir could be a great place from which to pull content for these social media posts. To reach a wider audience, these posts should be shared across various platforms, as not everyone is on the same social media. On Youtube, longer videos can be shared to get across more content or longer stories about each artist. Additionally, for all video content, subtitles should be sued for the greatest accessibility.

There are 18 featured artists on the OSLP website, so for the first 18 months, the content is already ready to go. At the six month mark, OSLP should begin evaluating the first few months’ statistics, as outlined below. Additionally, at this point OSLP should begin searching for new content to curate for when the first 18 months’ content runs out. Hopefully, this new content will feature video to capture and promote performing artists as well as visual artists.

This objective will be evaluated through a quantitative analysis of the number of likes, shares, and clicks of the social media marketing posts specifically created and labeled as emotional marketing. Utilizing Hootsuite, OSLP can measure impressions and reach of each post. This quantitative data should be recorded and examined over time to measure statistical trends in the data. Goals can be adjusted as needed throughout the process.

**Content Marketing**

Content marketing presents a cost effective opportunity for OSLP A&C to effectively reach a large online population and convey the intrinsic value of this organization. This form of marketing is suitable for OSLP A&C because it will focus the organization’s marketing approach on the impact it is making, as well as the impact donors and fundraisers are making. The overall objective is to utilize content marketing as a vehicle to present cohesive, useful, and authentic materials to participants and the public while providing a foundation to develop a brand identity. Through this strategy, OSLP A&C will have the ability to convey the impact they are making on the community, pulling in more support and participants.

A measurable objective for achievement is:

**Format 80% of marketing materials to produce authentic content marketing, focusing on impact, to better communicate the intangible value of OSLP’s Arts and Culture program.**

To begin this process, staff members need to start with identifying who they are as an organization. This process must include revising their mission, identifying what they want to convey to the public, and defining their objectives. If this is not thoroughly considered, the content marketing will be unstable and the strategy will be unsuccessful. Once authentic objectives are identified, relevant content can be developed.

Staff will then change their current marketing approach to focus primarily on impact. A current analysis of OSLP A&C marketing shows it is heavily focus on promotion of events, artwork, and artists. Promotion is important, however, the amount of promotion in current marketing tactics is obstructing the true identity of the organization. In order to combat this, content should highlight the impact OSLP A&C is making through data, percentages, and the stories of participants (including disabled population, artists, community members, staff). It should also highlight the impact donors and fundraisers are making as a means of acknowledgment and a call to action for others. Focusing on authentic content will convey the true identity of OSLP A&C.

Content marketing can only be measured through long term impact. However, resources such as DataArts and Apricot Essentials can be helpful in gaging the impact made from the beginning of implementing the content analysis to the end of the strategic marketing plan. Measurements could include participant engagement, revenue, fundraisers, donors (recurring), and social media traffic.

**Conclusion**

OSLP’s Arts & Culture Program is a key part of the larger organization and provides important services to the Eugene community. These marketing strategies will collectively help to boost awareness of the Arts & Culture Program and attract new participants and volunteers. Cross-promotion will strengthen existing partnerships, help build new relationships, and grow OSLP’s audience. Emotional marketing will showcase the amazing work the organization does by highlighting participants’ success stories and broadening the appeal of OSLP and their mission. This leads directly into our third strategy of content marketing. Content marketing will showcase the impact of the organization more holistically and streamline OSLP’s marketing materials to ensure there is a cohesive and easy-to-follow message. The success of all of these approaches can be evaluated by surveying partner organizations, participants, and volunteers. As applied to the Arts & Culture Program’s online presence, there are a variety of analytics available for the staff to review on a regular basis. With all three of these strategies it is most important to remember to maintain clear communication and to set specific goals.