

# MARKETING MECCA

(Material Exchange Center for Community Arts)



## AAD 609 Practicum – Sophie Navarro

This practicum focuses on event planning, marketing strategies and how to implement these strategies. MECCA wanted my help with marketing their big event titled “Raise A Glass To MECCA”. The event will take place on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup> and it is an event they have been having for 5 years. The marketing strategies MECCA uses are social media, direct marketing and fundraising. Each strategy works together in a collaborative function and must have deadlines in place. The skills I have learned within this practicum is how time management is crucial to meet deadlines, always learning how to strengthen my communication skills and learning how to approach local businesses for in kind donations. Fundraising is an excellent skill that takes patience, diligence and consistency. The marketing strategies I chose to focus on are:

1. **Social Media/Instagram and Facebook page** – Develop and implement consistent brand messaging/communications.

- Objective – Invite members, share event info out to a wider community and participate in dialogue regarding the event, invite talented artists to participate, promote local businesses and create a buzz for the event.

**2. Fundraising/Sponsorship** – Contacting restaurants and bars for in-kind donations, raffles and food for the event.

- Objective – Connect with local businesses and invite them to the event and/or participate by donating food, beer, and gift cards for the event.
- Asking for Excellent musicians to play tango music (MOOD AREA 52) This will attract a demographic who love to support art, artists and MECCA.
- Asking for Food donations for 300+ people
- Beer & Wine sales
- Art for sale – Call To Artists will be sent out this week.

**3. Direct Marketing** - Promoting the event through letters to be emailed to local businesses, direct mail, follow up by phone, call-to-artists flyers, partnerships, and VIP lists

- Creating spreadsheet tracking addresses, phone numbers and sending emails out now.
- Follow up with calls to ask if businesses received the letter.
- Sending Thank you Letters to businesses that donate!
- Bios/Artists in the community – Post information on MECCA’s website. This will attract more people, as it will give the community information about the artists that will be showing their work. Leveraging artists and connecting them to the buyers/art collectors to this event.

The purpose behind my motivation to work with MECCA is to understand how a non-profit organization works. In the beginning of the term, my learning objectives focused on how they receive their funding, gifts, and resources and how they market themselves in the community. I am also learning how each member on the board works with the volunteers and with teachers

in the community. They all really depend on each other to do their part to make things happen and there is a big push for all of us to stay on task each week as we get closer to April and then on the event day itself. I have learned how to keep asking questions about what is our budget and to make sure we are keeping within that range. The total budget is \$300 for marketing this event. It's important that we find free calendar listings, utilize as many different channels to spread the word out for the Call To Artists and to never be afraid to ask for donations. While it may save money and resources to stay within budget, it creates a great deal of work that must come from volunteers, the board, members and or donors. MECCA is a wonderful organization that supports their community by diverting material out of the waste stream and into the creative endeavors of their community. They strive to offer high quality arts programming at a very low cost and help artists thrive with local partners.

I am still learning so much and look forward to taking another credit with MECCA during spring term. I am excited to be a part of this event and want to see the event succeed. My goal is to continue to ask questions from the board, meet regularly to discuss our goals and see how I can strengthen my fundraising skills. There is a great deal of work ahead of me as I attempt to get in touch with more local businesses, maintain strong connections and develop new relationships to get the word out there regarding this event. I think what I would have done differently is to organize my daily and weekly tasks with specific timelines. This would keep me consistent and keep that active participation going. I think some of the challenges have to do with looking at marketing, as a whole with MECCA and it can be a little overwhelming. However, I am realizing these are all new skills for me to learn. It will take some practice and some guidance. I think I progressed when I saw that I could connect with a business owner and communicate positively about Raise A Glass To MECCA. I noticed that the more I called and practiced; the asking gets easier and is more fluid. Falling Sky – Rob Cohen said, “Yes” to donating a platter of food and throw in a gift card! The kinds of suggestions I have to improve my practicum experience is to meet the board members habitually which could be by email, phone and in person more continually. My schedule is structured differently since I do hold a full-time job at 40 hours a week and I needed to be creative around my lunch hours and in the evenings. This is something I know I can look at my time more effectively and see where I can maximize the way I approach marketing. It's amazing what happens when you start seeing opportunities to multi-task with how your schedule evolves each day. This is what really surprised me while I was working and how I was thinking about the organization.

My goal is to find creative solutions to promoting this event by communicating regularly with my own network of people I know in Eugene/Springfield and the wider rural communities. I am

also a local artist and have been marketing my own work for over 20 years so I can see the benefit of having an organization like MECCA that nurtures artists to get their work out there in front of other people. Marketing MECCA takes determination, consistency and passion. MECCA is really a giving organization to our community and this event is a way to celebrate this kind of sustainability. I am very pleased with my practicum experience this winter term.