

Final Report of Suggestions and Implications

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Dear Mr. Maxwell:

Thank you for the opportunity to propose a communications campaign for the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie. Our group looks forward to creating a campaign that focuses on improving the awareness and values of the Boys & Girls Club.

As an introduction to our campaign, we would like to share some of our findings from our research report on the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie.

- **Main problem:** As a group we researched the national Boys & Girls Club organization and the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie and compared our findings. From our research, we were able to find the main problem creating a decrease in members during the past year was a lack of funding and awareness.
- **Focus group findings:** To enhance our findings for this research report, we held two focus groups. The participants for each focus group were Ball State University students who have volunteered at the Boys & Girls Club. We found that most of the volunteers did not have a positive first experience at the club. Because the club is an outdated facility, volunteers had a problem with organization and assisting attendees.
- **Community opinions:** In order to gain an accurate idea of the community perception of the Boys & Girls Club, we designed an in-depth survey to be distributed to Muncie residents. The survey audience was particularly focused on parents/guardians of children in grades kindergarten through eighth grade.

In this communication campaign proposal, we will identify important key aspects, conduct different forms of research, define goals and objectives, and suggest thought-out strategies and ideas to be considered. We will create a campaign designed to spread awareness of the Boys & Girls Club in order to gain attention of key community donors. Because of the major benefits the Boys & Girls Club could offer the citizens of Muncie, we want to target these donors in an effort to raise money and educational tools for the facility. We have attached our research report for our communications campaign, as promised.

Table of Contents

Letter of Transmittal.....	Page 2
Executive Summary.....	Page 4
• Problem Statement.....	Page 4
• Problem Goal.....	Page 4
• Target Audiences.....	Page 4
Key Research Findings.....	Page 5
Research Summaries.....	Page 6
• Report 2.....	Page 6

- Report 3.....Page 7
- Report 4.....Page 8

Conclusion.....
Page 10

References and
Appendix.....Page 11

Problem Statement

The Boys & Girls Club of Muncie suffers greatly from having a lack of donors within the community. As the donors are the main source of funding for the organization, the facility and the progress of the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie rely on the money that the donors give. Due to the lack of donors for the organization, the facilities and volunteer attendance of the Muncie Boys & Girls club suffers greatly. With proper funding and planning with past and future donors, the facility can address these issues.

Program Goal

The primary goal is to bring in more donors from the surrounding community. Once more donors are providing additional funds and items, the Boys & Girls Club can fix the deteriorating facilities and the problems that arise from not having enough financial support.

Target Audiences

Our primary audience is the potential donors for the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie. We believe reaching out to the potential donors and informing them about the impact they could make in the community will help the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie significantly. This includes anyone in the community who is willing to donate funds or goods, such as new books, computers or furniture.

Our secondary audience is community members and parents/guardians of children who can attend the Boys & Girls Club. If we can inform them of the positive changes the Boys & Girls Club is making, as well as key benefits of the organization as a whole, it will spread awareness of the vital role the Club can play for families. This will increase attendance and volunteers, as well as shift the mindset of community members regarding the Club.

The tertiary audience includes potential volunteers for the Boys & Girls Club. Volunteers keep the Club running and also provide their opinions to the public. If volunteers aren't seeing the value in the Boys & Girls Club, they will relate that to others. With additional funds and educational items, volunteers will see and spread the relevance of the Club to the community, and be more likely to become repeat volunteers.

Key Research Findings

Our research findings point to a lack of funding for the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie. This has left the facility and surrounding area in a deteriorating state with outdated toys, books, play space and learning tools. The out-of-date facility has resulted in a decrease of essential volunteer and member interest in the community.

However, the building is debt free and has room to expand. Improving the facility will require additional funding, proving the importance of an increase in donors and stimulating more funds from past donors. With an increase in funds and educational items from key citizens and organizations in the community, the Club will be able to provide better services to the families of Muncie-Delaware County, proving their importance and relevance. Obtaining these additional funds are essential to the progression and growth of the Boys & Girls Club of Muncie.

Research Summaries

Report 2

The Boys and Girls Club of Muncie faces many challenges that should be addressed. The first and main challenge is a lack of awareness about the good work the club is doing for youth in the Muncie community. While the Boys and Girls Club on a national level is very well known, members of the Muncie community are not completely aware of the current status of the club. Many other problems stem from this lack of awareness..

One of the problems stemming from lack of awareness is inadequate funding for the club, leading to issues within the facility structure and safety of the facility itself. In the article Boys and Girls Club of Muncie Kicks Off Annual Campaign, the importance of afterschool programs is highlighted (Maxwell, 2014b). While the Annual Campaign is a great way to create more awareness for the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie, it is not being utilized to the best of its ability. This opportunity has presented itself to bridge the gap between the club and Muncie community, but again, the large amount of nonprofits makes it difficult to break through. In the article by Lovejoy about nonprofits using social media, it depicts the importance social media plays in getting a message across to a large public audience. While looking at the social media and website information about the Boys and Girls Club, the Annual Campaign is not a prevalent piece of information, therefore there is a disconnect. Bringing awareness to these problems is absolutely vital for the any organization to be successful (Lovejoy, 2012).

Because of the successful educational programs the club offers, the organization is helping students stay in school. With outdated facilities, Muncie parents are reluctant to send their children to the Boys and Girls Club. Our Nation's Dropout Crisis is Everyone's Problem: Why Boys and Girls Clubs are Part of the Solution discusses national issues of dropout rates (Nation's Dropout Crisis, 2010). "Teens not interested in after-school programs" also looks over the importance of afterschool programs and attendance is lacking on a national level, not just in Muncie (Poll: Teens not interested in after-school programs , 2006).

"Bullying Is Not Cool" looks at how the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie takes part in October's bullying prevention campaign. Because parents have safety concerns dropping their children off at the after school program, the organization is working with its members, volunteers and families to help educate them more on the simple steps to prevent bullying. The staff members at the club make sure to act as a support system for students who have been affected by bullying whether they have been bullied, bully others or have seen bullying. This campaign helps keep students supervised, guided and safe

because it offers them a place to go after school. Because the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie has a zero tolerance for bullying, it makes their facility safer and more open to students who want to talk about bullying (Maxwell, 2014a). The club needs to highlight this fact and communicate it better to families in the Muncie community to make a deeper impact on Muncie youth.

Report 3

Report 3 utilized focus groups to gain an understanding of volunteer perceptions of the Boys and Girls Club. The goal of these focus groups was to find out what problems the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie are facing by questioning volunteers who have seen them first-hand. We wanted to know what they thought the Boys and Girls Club was doing right and what areas they needed to improve. We focused our questions around perceptions, strengths and weaknesses of the Boys and Girls Club on both a national level as well as on a local level, asking volunteers for their suggestions for improvements at the end.

This particular study consisted of two focus groups. Each focus group consisted of seven participants, equaling 14 participants total. The majority of volunteers at the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie are college students from Ball State University; therefore the sample was taken from Ball State University students. Women represent the majority of volunteers for the Boys and Girls Club, but no specific major or hometown shows a majority. Therefore, the sample focused more on gender than any other demographic, reflecting a majority of women in the focus group. In both focus group session one and focus group session two, some participants were acquaintances. According to research, while strangers are usually preferred, acquaintances can help group dynamic and flow of conversation (Curtis & Redmond, 2009). The study population worked with all Ball State students, from a range of years and majors, with volunteer experience, specifically with the Boys and Girls Club.

The findings of the focus group proved to support our proposition that the club is not communicating well with multiple groups in the community. While not all focus group participants had volunteered or used the club as a child or teenager, all were familiar with the Boys and Girls Club on a national level. Even with this awareness nationally, not all were aware of the status of the local chapter of the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie. This again connects back with the groups research findings in Report 2. While awareness is present for the national organization, awareness and communication is lacking within the Muncie community.

One particular participant added that the club does not do well with volunteers, specifically college students working there. While the student was able to work at the club on a specific day and time, she arrived that same day the following week to find the club closed. This lack of communication is a downfall within the organization and leadership team of the club. Ball State University offers the club one of the largest systems of volunteers. With many campus organizations focusing on volunteerism, having strong communication with area volunteers is vital for the wellbeing of the organization and for the impression it leaves on its volunteers.

In addition, volunteers were unlikely to leave with a favorable impression of the Boys and Girls Club due to lack of organization and the state of the facility. This puts out a negative view of the Club to others in the community, weakening its ability to connect with the county it strives to help.

Report 4

In order to better understand the community's view of the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie, our survey was designed to target the citizens of Muncie within city limits and anyone within a ten mile radius. Specifically, we will be seeking the opinions of families and guardians of children in grades kindergarten through eighth grade.

Since we've already asked for volunteer input, our next step is to get the input of people who may actually use the Boys and Girls Club. Our hope for this step is to better understand the rapport of the Boys and Girls Club within the community and gain knowledge from people who have children who may attend the Club. With this information, we can figure out how to better communicate the Boys and Girls Club to the Muncie community by addressing the concerns or misconceptions of families in the area.

Our research procedures include distributing a survey to members of the Muncie community and processing their data to use in Boys and Girls Club communication plans. Our procedures are as follows:

We intend to reach our selected population through surveys passed out at local schools. "Local schools" in this case consist of ones included within Muncie's city limits and/or any school that is within a ten mile radius of the district. In addition, we would pass out the survey to parents when they come to pick up the child from the club. That way we know that people who are actually involved with the Boys and Girls Club would have a copy. We believe their opinions can guide us to finding the solution to the Club's ongoing problems. Parents, caretakers or guardians were selected to be our target audience through stratified random sampling. They are the 50 percent of our overall sample.

Included with the survey would be a discount for admission fees for the first year of service from the Boys and Girls Club or a coupon book with multiple deals from the Club's sponsors for existing members. There would also be a small flyer explaining the purposes of our survey and how it would be beneficial to the children who attend the club. This will be done so that our potential participants would have a full understanding of our intentions. The flyer would also include an online version of the survey so parents or guardians would be able to complete it online. This could potentially help them feel more anonymous while completing the survey. It is one of our goals to remain as transparent as possible when it comes to asking for participation. We want to be as open as possible to be in order to answer questions our participants might have in regards to our survey, research and overall goals. We hope that all of this would provide enough incentive to encourage our population to participate in our survey.

Conclusion

Our overall goal throughout this research campaign was to figure out the specific areas of weakness for the Boys and Girls Club of Muncie so we could address community donors with detailed reasons why they should help and what their money or resources would go toward. We did this by holding two focus groups and designing an in-depth survey. Site visits to the Boys and Girls Club confirm what our focus group participants told us: the facility is old and its resources are lacking. Parents and guardians may feel hesitant to utilize the Boys and Girls Club's services due to these issues. In addition, volunteers may think twice about returning after their first stint with the Club. All of these combine to create a poor perception of the Club in the minds of Muncie citizens.

Gaining insight from volunteers and current and potential Boys and Girls Club members has given us strong evidence on what should be fixed or modified to better serve the Muncie community. With this evidence, we can target past and potential community donors with a plan of action to revitalize their local Boys and Girls Club. Specifically, we can ask for additional funding or resources, such as books, computers, games or furniture, to better serve the Club's members. These changes would also attract new members and allow volunteers to better help the children who attend the Club. The Boys and Girls Club is an organization dedicated to creating better lives for children, but they can only do that with the assistance of the Muncie community.

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