**INTRODUCTION**:

# **Key Issues:**

The Greeley Historic Preservation Office is the local expert for areas of significant, historical importance around the Greeley Community. To accomplish this, the Greeley Historic Preservation Office hosts events throughout the year to help raise awareness about each of their important locations; while, attracting younger generations to the office and its events.

After meeting with our client, the Greeley Historic Preservation Office, we feel that it would be in the best interest to engage millennials and college-aged students to promote the 100th anniversary of the court house; as well as engagement for all activities that the Greeley Historic Preservation Office offers. Through raising awareness about the Greeley Historic Preservation Office and getting college students actively involved; there will be a mutual benefit for the Greeley Historic Preservation Office and the University of Northern Colorado.

# **Research:**

Our research consists of multiple sources including: web sites, blogs, selected newspaper articles and case studies.

# **Identifying Best Practices:**

This report will highlight the best practices used by other similar organizations to promote better attendance among millennials and college students. Other approaches will be considered before we write a full plan for the Greeley Historic Preservation Office.

## Best Practices we will highlight include:

1. Social media

2. Partnerships

3. Word of mouth

4. Traditional advertising

# **Social Media:**

With the advancement of technology, it is almost unheard of for an organization to not be on social media. A recent study found that roughly 81 percent of small and medium-sized business are engaging with customers to increase brand growth. (LinkedIn, 2014) Social media offers many benefits to a business’s online presence such as; providing another outlet for users to connect with the organization, helping drive traffic to the organization through online word of mouth and letting the organization develop and strengthen its relationships with customers through current trends on social media. (B2B Marketing, 2015)

Social media has proven to be a popular media outlet among millennials; especially young adults that fit the college-aged demographic. Statistics state that, 90 percent of young adults (ages 18 to 29) use social media and 35 percent of people over the age of 65 use some-sort of social media. (Pew Research Center, 2015) Those numbers show the importance of considering social media when an organization wants to raise brand awareness across all audiences. For millennials and college-aged students (aged 17-24), the “most important” social networks are: Instagram (32%), Twitter (24%), Facebook (14%), Snapchat (13%) and Tumblr (4%). (Internet Trends, 2015)

## Successful Practices:

1. Create and successfully maintain an Instagram account for the Greeley Historic Preservation Office like the Historic Preservation of Portland’s Instagram account.

The Historic Preservation of Portland’s Instagram account receives a lot of traffic due to its number of followers; along with the content that is posted. As of now, the Historic Preservation of Portland has: 263 posts, 2,284 followers and 825 accounts that the organization is following. Over the years, social media has become very popular for visual content; which is why Instagram’s popularity has risen so drastically. The Historic Preservation of Portland’s account posts around two to three posts a week and receives around 150-250 likes per post. It has been found that top brands post 4.9 times per week on Instagram. (Hootsuite, 2015) The Historic Preservation of Portland does an excellent job at staying consistent in the images that they post but also consistent with their captions. When a brand knows the importance of brand consistency; it will be able to: strengthen the organization’s name recall, show that there are no conflicting personalities within the organization and there will be no confusion about what the organization is trying to accomplish by using social media. Portland’s account also utilized the potential benefits of creating personalized hash-tags; that they consecutively add to posts to drive more traffic to their account. However, the Historic Preservation of Portland doesn’t have a call to action to drive traffic to their webpage; which is a huge benefit of using social media. Another tactic that the Historic Preservation of Portland didn’t utilized is interaction with its visitors. They have multiple comments on their posts but no response. The people commenting on the post did so for a reason. It would be beneficial to have that direct communication with visitors. (@historicpreservationportland, Instagram)

1. Establish and successfully run a social media campaign like the “This Place Matters” Campaign ran by the National Trust.

In 2008, Jason Clement, director of community outreach at the National Trust created a very successful project for people to showcase the historic places that played a role in their daily lives. The “This Place Matters” Campaign was described as, “crowdsourcing people’s personal connections to the built environment.” This campaign was successful due to its extremely low production cost and the number of people that this organization got to participate. The concept of this project is very simple; yet, very effective, and can be done by anyone. The National Trust had attendees of a conference visit their website to download and print a sign with their customized hashtag #ThisPlaceMatters. After people were instructed to take photos with the printed sign at places that matter most to them and share the photos online with their customized hashtag. “To date, thousands of photos have been snapped and shared. But beyond all the smiling faces, what I find endearing is how three simple words, ‘This Place Matters,’ have become ubiquitous in preservation.” (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2015)

# **Partnerships**:

Often times, nonprofit organizations engage in strategic nonprofit partnerships to gain brand exposure to audiences outside of their target market. Once a partnership is secured; there is added value in working with another organization. The benefits of an effective partnership generally don’t appear overnight. It will be important to create the framework and to measure its success or failure as the relationship builds­­. (Publow, 2010).

A partnership can be defined as the collaboration of organizations as they work collectively towards accomplishing shared goals. Partnerships can be the solution for delivering empirical results to concerns that the nonprofit organization may currently be facing. Before considering developing a partnership, there are several components that organizations and their potential partners must keep in mind when working with each other. Each organization must examine its leadership, common understanding, purpose, culture and values, learning and development, communication and performance management to ensure a quality on-going relationships. (Publow, 2010).

## Successful Practices:

1. Create partnerships with the University of Northern Colorado’s history and music departments to implement “class projects” or “class service.”

Many nonprofits have seen the benefits of collaborating with class projects to get students engaged in their organization. A rural nonprofit organization wanted to update its downtown business district and didn’t know how to attract the student demographic. This nonprofit contacted a professor that taught a landscaping course in hopes of developing a partnership that will allow student interaction with their organization. The students toured, researched and created possible design proposals that appealed to the younger demographic. This ultimately got students engaged and talking about the organization around campus. (Aschenbrener, 2010)

1. Create a service-learning partnership with the University of Northern Colorado.

“Service-Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” (Aschenbrener, 2010). At Clarke University, they have implemented a service-learning program that is designed to focus on offering public service to strengthen student learning with first-hand experience. The Service Learning Program at Clarke University collaborates with community-based organizations to integrate course work; which ultimately drives more traffic to those organizations. (Clarke University, 2013)

1. Collaborate with the Greek Life community as service partners.

At the University of Kansas, Greek Life and Community Organizations have collaborated to create partnerships that serve the advancement of fraternities and sororities, while also maintaining meaningful relationships with local nonprofit organizations. The Center for Civic and Social Responsibility and the Office? Of Fraternity and Sorority Life have combined services on this campus to create a powerful relationship. With this partnership, it has gotten students who are actively involved with Greek Life out into their local communities. Through this new relationship, students are able to experience the importance of having their fraternity or sorority actively engaging in the community. “The Fraternity and Sorority Life community is constantly striving to create stronger and bigger impacts regarding service and relationships across campus as well as in Lawrence, and this partnership with the Center for Civic and Social responsibility presents the perfect opportunity to do so.” (Hall, 2016)

# **Word of Mouth:**

According to the 2016 Consumer Reports Goods Report, millennials rely on word of mouth before they purchase a product. (Marketing Staff, 2016) Word of mouth is the most successful form of advertising with millennials. When word of mouth is used, 84 percent of consumers reported always or sometimes taking action based on personal recommendations. (Nielson) These include: looking at the retailers’ websites, online product reviews, brand websites, and social media interactions with the brand.

## Successful Practices:

1. Word of mouth can increase brand awareness

Creating events for the local community can increase brand awareness and brand reputation. Chipotle uses local free festivals to help promote the company and engage with consumers. In 2013, “Cultivate” drew more than 300,000 attendees across San Francisco, Denver and Chicago and were featured across multiple local media outlets. (ReferralCandy, 2015)

1. Sharing positive experiences on social media

Social media is an effective source to reach millennials in a personalized manner. If a current consumer posts about a product or event; friends of that consumer that are under the age of 34 are 68 percent more likely to purchase or attend that event. It is also a way for a company to get social proof. (GetAmbassador, 2014)

# **Traditional advertising: (Against for millennials and college-aged students)**

When it comes to traditional advertising it is still useful; however, it is not as effective as other forms of advertising when the target audience is millennials. Marketers have been talking about the “death” of traditional advertising since the 1990s due to the advancement of technology.

Traditional advertising could be used to reach an older target audience in order to keep current customers involved with current events. Most traditional marketing strategies fall under one of four categories: print, broadcast, direct mail and telephone. To reach a younger audience, organizations must go beyond traditional marketing. Most college students in Greeley do not look at their mail for advertisements, do not listen to local radio channels, and just skim over most flyers and posters. According to a recent study, 84 percent of millennials don’t like traditional advertising, nor do they trust it. (Chen, 1)

Three reasons millennials avoid traditional advertising are: traditional ads are intrusive, most ads are not genuine and millennials like to make their own decisions. Too much advertising will only cause frustration and hurt the brand’s image when it comes to millennials.

In order to have success with millennials, companies must establish themselves as experts in their field. They also must be considered authentic, credible and honest companies. Millennials do not like to be told what to do or what they should buy. They are skeptics of everything around them and need to make their decisions on their own. The idea is to mention the product rather than bombard them with advertisements. They want to feel like the company they support has purpose and stands behind an idea they believe in.

## Successful Practices:

1. Traditional media such as newspapers are not being used by the younger audience.

According to a study from Pulizzi & Barrett, newspaper readership has decreased dramatically from 1970 to 2006. 50 percent less of young adults aged between 18 and 24 are reading newspapers today. (Pulizzi & Barrett 2009, 10-12.)

1. Millennials look for a sense of belonging.

The report says that the brands who consistently rank highest with Millennials are those that have pushed beyond traditional advertising methods to build customer relationships representing friendships. (Moosylvania and Great Questions 2015, 11)

# **Conclusion:**

Through extensive research, we examined the following best practices that have been previously aimed towards engaging Millennials specifically, the college-age demographic. These approaches included: social media, partnerships, word of mouth and traditional advertising.

As a result of this report, we will consider these practices and their outcomes before writing a final public relations plan for The Greeley Historic Preservation Office.

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