4-28-2015

Public Relations Campaign Guide: The Importance of Affordable Housing

James Blake Soper
Western Kentucky University, jbsoper365@yahoo.com

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu_hon_theses

Part of the Life Sciences Commons, Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, and the Public Law and Legal Theory Commons

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/stu_hon_theses/532

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors College Capstone Experience/Thesis Projects by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN GUIDE:
THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A Capstone Experience/Thesis Project
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Bachelor of Arts with
Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By:

James Blake Soper

*****

Western Kentucky University
2015

CE/T Committee:
Professor Vicki Bagwell, Advisor
Dr. Lauren McClain
Dr. Elizabeth Gish

Approved by

___________
Advisor
School of Journalism
and Broadcasting
Copyright by
James Blake Soper
2015
ABSTRACT

As a way to encourage participation in a movement against a long-held issue with broad impact yet little reform, this compilation describes the processes of research, planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating an effective public relations campaign on homelessness and/or homeownership by breaking down each step in detail. These details include: my experience as a public relations professional for Home Matters doing a similar campaign, professional advice from individuals considered to be experts in their various careers, and applicable samples of work. This compilation’s purpose is to provide individuals and organizations with the knowledge and skills to conduct an effective campaign to reduce homelessness and/or increase homeownership among U.S. residents. As a result, lack of experience, budget restrictions, or the absence of a public relations person will no longer hinder anyone from adopting the movement in helping everyone achieve homeownership and to finally end homelessness.

Keywords: Public Relations, Homeownership, Homelessness, Campaign Guide
This guide is dedicated to the mission of making home a reality for all.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start by thanking my friends and family for the support and encouragement I needed to get me where I am today and where I want to be tomorrow. Then, of course, I would like to thank and acknowledge my thesis readers, Vicki Bagwell and Lauren McClain, for their continual support both inside and outside the classroom, advice, and recommendations. Finally, I would like to give special recognition in no particular order to the following people for helping me make this guide a reality either through intellectual insight, volunteerism, or in-kind donations: Brittany Moster, Neil Purcell, Emily Thoren, Ashlee Manley, Alyson Manley, Catherine Havel, Brandon Goodwin, Mallory Schnell, Meghan Althauser, Hanna Philpot, Jay Todd Richey, Emily Roach, Natalie Wynn, Madison Shirley, Shelby Rogers, and Elizabeth Gish.
VITA

September 11, 1993............................................. Born—Mt. Sterling, KY

2011................................................................. Graduated—Montgomery County
High School, KY

2011 – 2015......................................................... WKU Honors Student

February 2015....................................................... Implemented—The Importance of
Affordable Housing Campaign in
Bowling Green, KY

March 2015.......................................................... Presented at the WKU Student
Research Conference: Public
Relations Campaign Guide: The
Importance of Affordable Housing

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field 1: Public Relations

Major Field 2: Sociology

Minor Field: Marketing

Concentration of Study: Pre-Law
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sections:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Researching</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Globally, Act Locally</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Credibility</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Planning</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Primary Research</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Survey</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactics</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Organizing</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnering</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Partnership Agreement</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsorships and Funding</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Grant Letter Proposal</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample News Release</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggested Activities and Ideas</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Media Advisory</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guest Speakers ........................................................................................................50

5. Implementing ..................................................................................................53
   Recruiting Volunteers .........................................................................................53
   Assigning Roles .................................................................................................55
   Social Media ......................................................................................................57

6. Evaluating .......................................................................................................60
   Objectives ..........................................................................................................60
   News Media ........................................................................................................62
   Events ................................................................................................................64
   Social Media ......................................................................................................65

7. Next Steps ......................................................................................................69
   Leaving a Legacy ...............................................................................................69
   Lobbying ...........................................................................................................70
   Sample Proclamation ........................................................................................73

Appendix .............................................................................................................74

Further Reading .................................................................................................82

References .........................................................................................................84
SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

While homeownership in the United States has never been all-inclusive and homelessness nonexistent, residents are starting to experience the unexpected: Homelessness is increasing, and homeownership is decreasing. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2014), the United States experienced a homeownership rate of 64.8 percent in 2014, which is the lowest rate of homeownership in the United States since 1995 when it was 64.2 percent. In addition, “More than half a million people in the U.S. do not have a home, a quarter of whom are children,” according to Home Matters (2014), a national movement with the mission to decrease homelessness and increase affordable rent, homeownership, and the quality of homes and communities.

As a way to collaborate with the Home Matters movement, confront an issue with which I have close ties and contribute to society, I am creating a “how to” guide to describe the entire process of researching, planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating an effective public relations campaign on homelessness and/or homeownership by breaking down each step in detail, presenting first-hand experience, giving experts’ advice, and providing applicable samples. This compilation’s purpose is to provide you with the knowledge and skills to conduct an effective campaign to reduce homelessness and/or increase homeownership among U.S. residents.
While I am designing the guide to directly reflect a homelessness and/or a homeownership campaign, it can also be used as a template for most public relations campaigns anywhere on any subject due to the standard nature of the steps and skills in raising awareness and influencing behavior. In addition, the compilation is certainly useful as a whole, but you may find it more valuable by looking at it in parts to build specific skills.

Either way, my hope is to present the material simplistically to convince readers to partake in the Home Matters movement and assert action. Just as children often do not have a voice in public interest issues, homeless people experience the same neglect. However, nonprofits and other social organizations can give homeless individuals a voice through public relations efforts. Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006) put it best: “Public relations facilitates adjustment and maintenance in the social systems that provide us with our physical and social needs” (p. 25).
SECTION 2
RESEARCH

Although there are many different and actively used definitions, the Public Relations Society of America (2015), or PRSA, defines public relations as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” By “strategic communication,” PRSA encapsulates exactly what this section is all about. Public relations requires intensive research—not only initially, but throughout the entire process to make sure you are using your communication efficiently and effectively. However, unlike many traditional disciplines, public relations professionals seek to use research to form more than formal hypotheses and assessments, but also objectives, tactics, and strategies. Yet, like many traditional social science disciplines, public relations professionals conduct both primary and secondary research (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 7).

Secondary Research

When developing your campaign on homelessness or homeownership awareness, it is important to collect all pertinent information surrounding this issue including history, benefits, descriptions, ideologies, perspectives, target audiences that you are seeking to influence, and the current market for the campaign. The significance in collecting this information before even planning is: (1) better understanding the topic around which your
campaign will be built and (2) the knowledge to determine how to make best use of your resources for all stages of a campaign.

By definition, any information that was not compiled directly from your efforts but was found from another author and published in any form is considered secondary research. For example, while researching for a team I was a part of in Bowling Green, Kentucky, “Operation: Owning the Dream,” which sought to redefine the American Dream to include homeownership for all individuals, I analyzed news media articles on current housing markets and buying behaviors, journal articles on homelessness and homeownership, and even other campaigns’ social media accounts that sought objectives similar to our campaign (Soper, Manley, Manley, & Havel, 2015). All of this was secondary research.

*Think Globally, Act Locally*

“Think globally, act locally” is a growing phrase in entrepreneurship that encourages individuals to account for the well-being of the world when taking action in their local community (Hoffman & Casnocha, 2012). With homelessness and homeownership being the primary topic of your public relations campaign, it is important to realize how your efforts will connect to what is already being done in the world surrounding these issues. This is where the purpose of secondary research comes into play.

When acting as a public relations professional, it is important to realize that we do not always have to reinvent the wheel nor do we have the time or resources to do so. It is unnecessary to interview or implement your own surveys to find information that is already compiled and accessible to you. Sometimes, it just takes some work to find what
you are looking for. For instance, if you are looking for reliable statistics, then governmental websites are often the best place to start. The information is available for public use and thought of as accurate information by the general public, which brings about our next major point of discussion: credibility.

**Source Credibility**

Through my experience working as a teaching assistant during my undergraduate career, I found that when conducting research, students often struggle finding information that is considered credible. According to Purdue Owl, a website produced by Purdue University and has been providing research writing assistance for students for more than 20 years, a credible source is one that comes from an author who is well respected in his or her field of study, provides up-to-date information, presents unbiased information, and/or derives information from sources that your audience will find believable (Weilda & Stolley, 2013).

An easy way to determine if a source is unbiased is judging whether the author addressed both sides of the issue. A biased source will try to sway its readers to adopt a certain belief, whereas an unbiased source will allow the reader to make his or her own opinion based on the information provided. However, keep in mind that, as a public relations professional, your job is to sway your target audience’s opinions, so having biased sources that support your organization’s opinions can be useful if you believe that your target audience will find the source reliable and believable (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006).

In regards to believability, it is important to understand your audience, or the people you will be addressing directly with your campaign. If you are addressing a
politically conservative audience, it may not be a good idea to cite a news article from MSNBC or even CNN because the audience may view it as unreliable due to the organizations’ liberal reputations. If you have an audience of scholars, peer-reviewed, or published journal articles that have gone through a panel of readers for validity may be more ideal than a news publication that has political associations and is not always checked for facts. The idea is to make sure that the information you are providing to your audience comes from sources that it will believe and find reliable.

When gathering secondary research from online sources or websites, you must be more skeptical than with other more tangible sources. Purdue Owl states, “Never use [websites] where an author cannot be determined, unless the site is associated with a reputable institution such as a respected university, a credible media outlet, government program or department, or well-known non-governmental organizations” (Weilda & Stolley, 2015, para. 6). When information is gathered from sources without authors or from unknown organizations, it is difficult to determine their credibility because we cannot determine from where the information derives. Therefore, we do not know if the information is reliable or not.

After conducting secondary research, the next step is to determine how you will use it. This might be the most crucial part in the research process due to the legal complications. Since you are using others’ information to structure your public relations campaign, it is important to give credit when it is due. Copyrights, trademarks, and intellectual property rights are a growing concern, and to avoid legal litigations, it is always best to play it safe by accrediting the author both in the campaign’s verbal media, such as video, audio, or presentations, and written publications (Guth & Marsh, 2003). In
addition, you may take extra precaution by getting written consent to use the intellectual property by simply contacting the author(s) and discussing how you plan to use it (Guth & Marsh, 2003). Stressing that you plan to use his or her property to better society by trying to make home a reality for all and ensuring proper citation will often be enough to get his or her approval. Thus, you are preventing legal action.

The following is a list of suggested secondary research topics to help you find information on your target audience and campaign materials (Green, Tull, & Albaum, 1993, p. 136):

1. List and describe any individuals associated with your organization, if applicable.

2. Provide names and background of individuals or groups that have similar interests as you.

3. Find results of relevant surveys and opinion polls.

4. Compile a list of governmental agencies and legislators that might have a personal stake with homelessness or homeownership.

5. Compile a list of relevant legislation, regulations, and other governmental documents or hearings.

6. Make copies of published research on housing conditions, homelessness, or homeownership.

7. Make copies of relevant news coverage nationally and locally.

8. Construct a list of contacts for relevant local and national news media.

9. Create a list of special events and other important dates related to housing conditions.

10. List and describe any relevant event and activity idea.
SECTION 3

PLANNING

Since public relations is a strategic communication, you must remember that strategy requires planning. Stefan Topfer (2011), the creator of WinWeb Cloud Technology, one of the biggest Internet Service Providers in Europe, described running a business as similar to running a public relations campaign: “It is easy to start a project, but without careful planning it is like setting off on a journey to an unknown destination without a roadmap. You might manage to make it to your destination eventually, but don't be surprised if you get really lost on the way” (para. 2). Even if you or the organization that you are representing has a large budget, planning can save you money, time, and be the difference in having an average campaign with little impact and one that has broad impact with long-term activism.

Conducting Primary Research

While primary research is a tool to compile information for your campaign materials, it requires long-term planning due to the cost associated and the nature of its use in a nonprofit setting. In addition, I included primary research in the planning stage of this guide because in public relations, primary research differs dramatically from secondary research and requires extensive secondary research beforehand. In this section, we will predominately cover surveys and focus groups; however, primary research also includes interviews, observations, and ethnography (study by
doing). **Remember:** Primary research is research that is conducted by you or your organization.

**Surveys.** Surveys are a cost-effective way to measure the opinions and current awareness of your target audience before starting your public relations campaign, and they are just as effective in evaluating your campaign’s impact afterward (see page 60 for more information on evaluating surveys). While surveys may seem familiar to you since nearly everyone has taken at least one at some point in his or her life, there are a few rookie mistakes that can easily be prevented. Qualtrics (2010), a popular online survey software, categorized these mistakes into five areas: population specification, sampling, selection, non-responsive and measurement.

When distributing the survey, it is important that you measure the opinions and awareness of the people you will be engaging in your campaign, hence the term “population specification.” A population is people you wish to target with your campaign. You can ensure the appropriate population specification by restricting access or distributing your survey to only individuals who appear to fit your target profile or by including a specific question to determine the respondent’s eligibility (Qualtrics, 2010).

For example, in my public relations campaign on homelessness and homeownership, my primary and secondary target audience was only made up of the WKU student body (Soper et al., 2015). So, I only wanted to distribute surveys to people who were students at WKU. I had two strategies in doing so. First, I distributed my survey to all Greek community chapters, which only consist of students (Soper et al., 2015). Second, I made the survey available through social media, but the first question I asked was, “Are you a current student at WKU?” (Soper et al., 2015). If the response was
“yes,” then the student was directed to the complete survey. If the response was “no,” then the non-student was directed to the end of the survey and asked no further questions. Therefore, I was able to ensure that my survey was valid.

In terms of sampling, you always want to make sure that your survey is as representative of your total target audience as possible, which leads us into the next term: selection (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 212). In order to ensure a representative sample, your selection of respondents should be as random as possible. By random, I mean that everyone in your target audience has the same likelihood of being chosen. While this method is most ideal, it is often difficult to achieve due to time restraints and expenses associated with distributing such a survey (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 212). My recommendation for creating a random sample that is also representative is to try to distribute the survey to as many people within your target audience as possible both online and in person. While everyone will not take the survey (this is called non-responsiveness), you should try to aim for at least a 10 percent response rate to attain a representative sample (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 302).

The last common mistake is measurement, or whether the data you are collecting from your respondents are relevant to your campaign (Qualtrics, 2010). Two important questions you should always ask yourself when creating survey questions are: How does this question relate to my campaign? And how can the responses be used to enhance my campaign? Ideally, if you cannot answer both of these questions with legitimate cause, then you should omit the question. Plus, the shorter and simpler the survey, the more likely a person will take it.

The following is a checklist to help prevent unnecessary questions in your survey:
1. All questions relate to your campaign.

2. All questions enhance your campaign by providing useful data to include in reports.

3. Demographic or geographic questions are only asked to better engage with your target audience and provide relevant information on respondents.

4. Your survey keeps your respondents anonymous (no self-identifying questions).

5. Questions that directly measure your campaign’s objectives are included.

6. Your survey is easy to read.

7. Your directions are easy to comprehend.

8. Your survey format is consistent throughout.

9. Your survey has correct spelling and punctuation.

10. You allow respondents a space to include additional information and comments.
Sample Survey. The following is a survey taken from Operation: Owning the Dream and the Home Matters public relations campaign in Bowling Green, Kentucky. We made the survey available both online and in person (Soper et al., 2015).

What is your gender?
- □ Male
- □ Female

What is your age?
- □ 18-25
- □ 26-33
- □ 34-50
- □ 50 or above

What is your current living situation?
- □ Homeowner
- □ Renter
- □ Residence Hall
- □ Residing with Parents
- □ Other:_____________________

What social media platforms do you use regularly? (Check ALL that apply)
- □ Facebook
- □ Twitter
- □ Instagram
- □ Pinterest
- □ LinkedIn
- □ Other:_____________________

How do you get your news? (Check TOP 3)
- □ Television
- □ Radio
- □ Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- □ Email
- □ Friends
- □ Newspapers
- □ Other:_____________________

Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) own the home you lived in growing up?
- □ Yes
- □ No

How interested are you in becoming a homeowner in the future?
- Very Interested
- Somewhat Interested
- Neutral
- Somewhat Uninterested
- Very Uninterested

How familiar are you with the process of becoming a homeowner?
- Very Familiar
- Somewhat Familiar
- Neutral
- Somewhat Unfamiliar
- Very Unfamiliar

Are you aware of the programs that educate individuals on how to become homeowners?
- □ Yes
- □ No

If “Yes,” please indicate program(s):_____________________

12
Sample Survey continued. Note that in the survey, we kept consistency throughout by bolding questions, not bolding responses, starting with most positive responses on the left to most negative responses on the right and using boxes to indicate response field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you aware of Home Matters and its mission/mission?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How important to you are the following benefits of homeownership?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Success</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How important is “The American Dream” (achieving personal success) to you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Somewhat Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Do you believe that homeownership is a part of “The American Dream”?**

□ Yes □ No

**How much do you believe homeownership influences the quality of homes and communities?**

None □ Slightly □ Moderately □ Severely □

**How much do you believe homelessness influences the quality of homes and communities?**

None □ Slightly □ Moderately □ Severely □

**How would you describe the homeless/ lack of adequate housing situation in Bowling Green?**

Nonexistent □ Minor □ Moderate □ Severe □

**How would you describe the homeless/ lack of adequate housing situation in Kentucky?**

Nonexistent □ Minor □ Moderate □ Severe □

**How would you describe the homeless/ lack of adequate housing situation in the United States?**

Nonexistent □ Minor □ Moderate □ Severe □

**How interested are you in helping to end homelessness?**

Very Interested □ Somewhat Interested □ Neutral □ Somewhat Uninterested □ Very Uninterested □

**Comments:**
**Focus Groups.** Focus groups are discussions organized to explore a specific set of issues to determine people's views and experiences on a particular issue or topic (Guth & Marsh, 2003). The group is 'focused' in that it involves some kind of collective activity such as viewing a film or debating a particular set of questions. Focus groups differ from group interviews due to their overt use of group interaction as a research data and tool (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 209).

In public relations campaigns, focus groups are most beneficial in determining people’s beliefs and attitudes on a particular topic. As public relations professionals, we want to know this because we must recognize their attitudes and beliefs first in order to strategize on how to change them (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 309). For example, in your homeownership campaign, you may discover through focus groups that millennials are not interested in ever owning a home, which could be detrimental to your campaign if you were not aware of this phenomenon initially. However, through a focus group, you could have discovered this and looked deeper into the matter to determine why these individuals feel this way. Often, getting to the central belief or attitude will help you determine how to change it.

When conducting a focus group, there are three main steps: organizing participants, running the focus group session, and evaluating the interactions and comments (Kitzinger, 1994). Based on a detailed study on focus group methodology by Jenny Kitzinger (1994), I will provide you with the knowhow and knowledge to create a successful focus group for your public relations campaign.

When selecting participants for your focus groups, there are many variables to consider. First, you must decide on the audience you want to engage, such as opinion
leaders, homeowners, potential homeowners, students, single mothers, families, or your
target audience (if not already mentioned).

Then, you will determine how many focus groups you will hold. Often, this
number will depend on time, resources, and participant willingness, which could be
enhanced by providing incentives for participation; however, you must be aware that
incentives that are over compensating can cause inaccurate information from participants
due to their desire to please the researcher (Kitzinger, 1994).

Finally, you want to determine the setting and dynamic of the focus group. An
easy way to control the setting and dynamic is by determining whether you want a group
that knows each other or a group that is “random.” The advantage of using pre-existing
groups is the fact that you can determine how people interact and respond within various
and overlapping groupings within which they already operate (Kitzinger, 1994).

Although running or facilitating a focus group may seem straightforward, it
requires a significant amount of planning to predetermine the level of interaction wanted
among participants and between the participants and the facilitator. For example,
Kitzinger (1994) stated that minimal participation from the facilitator allowed that
facilitator to find his or her feet and allowed the participants to set the priorities. In
contrast, maximizing interaction or interventionist style of facilitating might “urge debate
to continue beyond the stage it might otherwise have ended, [yet, challenge] people's
taken for granted reality [by] encouraging them to discuss the inconsistencies both
between participants and within their own thinking” (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 106). It is also
important to keep in mind that a facilitator should ask no more than 10 open-ended
question and should avoid “yes” or “no” questions to maintain a high level of interaction
(Guth & Marsh, 2003, pp. 210-211). Although the questions will be predetermined and systematic, they should have a natural flow.

After facilitating and observing your focus group(s), it is now time for evaluation and making sense of the information you obtained. While it will probably be most obvious what the consensus of the group was due to the vocalization of the group’s customs and experiences, the differences between individuals within the group may not be as noticeable even though they are equally important and rarely disappear from view (Kitzinger, 1994). In other words, acknowledging differences between participants allows you to observe not only how people conceive their own point of view but also how they do in relation to other perspectives.

The following is a checklist of questions you should ask yourself as you create and implement a focus group (Kitzinger, 1994; Guth & Marsh, 2003, pp. 210-211):

1. What is the purpose of your focus group?
2. What types of information are of particular importance?
3. Who can provide your needed information?
4. What is your timeline, proposed budget and specified procedures?
5. Does your prompt for the facilitator have fewer than 10 questions?
6. Did you avoid using “yes” or “no” questions?
7. Do all of your questions have a natural flow and logical sequence?
8. Did the focus group session last no longer than 90 minutes?
9. Will you record or take notes during the focus group?
10. Does your facilitator know how to guide discussions back from irrelevant topics, make transitions between questions, and be sensitive to the mood of the group?
11. How will you use the group dynamics and responses as well as individual responses and body language to evaluate the focus group?

*Objectives*

In order to implement a successful public relations campaign, you must first set objectives before any sort of implementation. While many believe “objectives” and “goals” are synonymous, they are not. Goals are general, often intangible and emotionally driven (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 246). Objectives, on the other hand, are specific, tangible or measurable, and tend to be analytically driven (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 246). It may be easier to remember that objectives are steps to achieving a goal, and the goal is the organization’s statement about what it would like to ultimately achieve.

The purpose of using objectives in any public relations campaign is to have measurable statements of action with which you can evaluate your campaign’s effectiveness (Guth & Marsh, 2003, pp. 246-247). In other words, objectives let you know whether your campaign was a success.

In public relations campaigns, objectives usually fall under one of three categories: awareness, attitudinal, or behavioral. Awareness objectives are used to create awareness, understanding, or comprehension (Hallahan, 2003). An example from my campaign for Home Matters was “to raise awareness of Home Matters and its mission among WKU students from 2 percent to 20 percent by the end of February” (Soper et al., 2015). Attitudinal objectives are used to establish, reinforce, or change someone’s attitude on a particular topic (Hallahan, 2003). In many cases, political candidates use this type of objective in their campaigns and will look something like: to establish understanding of the candidate’s position on key public issues among 80 percent of
voters by Election Day. Behavioral objectives are used to establish, reinforce, or change behaviors (Hallahan, 2003). The key difference with behavioral objectives is that they create action. For example, a political candidate’s behavioral objective would be: to attain more than 50 percent of the votes by the end of Election Day.

While creating objectives may be a new experience for you, Alvin Toffler, an American writer for Fortune magazine and Cornell University professor, created a model known as the SMART approach to help any individual create effective objectives. SMART stands for specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (Toffler, 2013). While the SMART approach does not generate objectives for you, it does help you compare your objectives against the SMART criteria to ensure effective objectives.

When looking at the SMART approach in detail, S, or Specific, refers to whether or not your objective identifies both the target audience and what you are wanting to accomplish (Toffler, 2013). Using my Home Matters awareness objective above, the target audience would be WKU students and what I sought to accomplish was raise awareness of Home Matters and its mission.

M, or Measurable, refers to whether or not the objective is quantifiable (Toffler, 2013). So, you must ask yourself, “Can this objective be measured?” If your objective is based on a change in awareness, attitude or behavior, then you must determine whether and how you can distinguish that change. The Home Matters example is measurable because it quantifies exactly what I want to achieve: awareness from 2 percent to 20 percent. Without stating a specific quantity, you will be unable to determine the success of your objective later.
A, or Achievable, refers to an objective that can be accomplished in the proposed time frame with the available resources and support (Toffler, 2013). Implementing a campaign on homelessness and homeownership most likely means that you are working with limited funds, so it is important to look critically at your objective and determine if you can actually successfully meet the objective within the time period established. Achieving a change of awareness from 2 to 20 percent in the Home Matters campaign meant a change of awareness in a couple hundred WKU students since our primary target audience was about 4,000 student leaders (Soper et al., 2015). Knowing this, my campaign group found this percent change attainable for our one-month campaign and $1,300 budget (Soper et al., 2015).

R, or Realistic, determines whether or not the objective addresses the goal (Toffler, 2013). You will only want objectives that will help you reach your organization’s goal. Otherwise, you will be wasting time and resources and divert much of your campaign away from what is important to the organization.

**Note:** Much of your campaign will be built around your objectives, so it is important to get them corresponding with your organization’s goal. Home Matters’ goal is to build awareness and raise funds for more affordable homes and better communities across the nation (Home Matters, 2014). Similarly, my objective overlaps with this by building awareness of what Home Matters seeks to do (Soper et al., 2015).

Lastly, T, or Time-bound, simply refers to whether or not the objective proposes a definite timeline (Toffler, 2013). When creating an objective, you want to include a defined time period because it establishes exactly when your objective should be evaluated to determine success (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 247). Depending on the
circumstances of your campaign, the time frame may be determined for you or you may have to create your own. Yet, when deciding a time frame, you may want to consult with organizational leaders, management, or colleagues to determine an appropriate period.

For the Home Matters campaign, my group and I were confined to the month of February by PRSSA Bateman rules, so naturally we selected the end of February to be appropriate for our end date (Soper et al., 2015).

The following is a checklist to help you create appropriate objectives for your campaign (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 247; Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 323-324):

1. All objectives clearly identify an audience.
2. All objectives state what you want to accomplish.
3. All objectives have a numerical measurement that you plan to achieve.
4. All objectives are stated in infinitive form or begin with the word “To…”
5. All objectives can be achieved using your time frame and resources.
6. All objectives address the organization’s goal.
7. All objectives explicitly state a time frame.
8. All objectives are clearly defined and separate from one another.

Strategies

Strategies in the public relations realm are overall themes or approaches that you plan to use to achieve the organizational goal and corresponding objectives (Cutlip, 2006, p. 315). In simpler terms, a strategy describes “how” you will help your organization. Types of strategies include: policy changes or recommendations, additional research, branding, arrangements, or communication (Hallahan, 2003).
Policy changes or recommendation strategies are strategies that occur before any communication with your target audience (Hallahan, 2003). These might include changes in organization policy, target audience, clients, or messages. Although this type of strategy may seem obscure, in some cases, these changes may be necessary to prevent future obstacles to the organization’s and your campaign’s success. Keep in mind, these types of strategies will most likely require collaboration and cooperation of other divisions within the organization, such as upper-level management.

After gaining experience as a public relations professional, you will come to realize that research is at nearly every phase of a campaign, and sometimes strategies are developed to cater to this fact. However, for the purposes of a homelessness and homeownership awareness campaign, a research strategy would most likely address the undertaking of primary research, such as a survey or focus group to clarify information prior to the implementation of your campaign (Hallahan, 2003). Research strategies should be addressed before any other strategies and before the start of a campaign (Hallahan, 2003).

Branding strategies are usually straightforward, unless the organization is relatively new (Hallahan, 2003). In either case, you must decide how you want to portray your campaign through the use of logos, trademarks, social media, designs, etc. According to Melinda Gates (2011), the wife of Microsoft creator Bill Gates, nonprofits and other social organizations can learn from corporate organizations, such as Coca-Cola, by creating consistent, yet distinctive images and brands for your target audience to remember and engage with. If you create a brand that is consistent throughout all media for your campaign, then your audience will most likely begin to associate your brand
with your messages. **Note:** Brand strategies should be addressed before the start of the implementation phase of your campaign to ensure consistency.

Arrangement strategies are strategies that address the confirmation of events, speakers, budget extension, or other details that are essential to your campaign’s success (Hallahan, 2003). These strategies must be confirmed and improved before any detail of the campaign is outlined because the whole plan is contingent upon them (Hallahan, 2003). Failure to secure these arrangements might cause severe altering to your campaign plan. Examples include securing a special venue, obtaining a celebrity spokesperson, or forming a partnership with an outside organization.

Lastly, communication strategies are those that address how you plan to get your key messages to your target audience (Hallahan, 2003). In almost all circumstances, these are the only strategies that will be addressed during the implementation phase of your campaign. Therefore, these strategies should include sufficient details and should address the issue of homelessness or homeownership in some way. An example from the Operation: Owning the Dream campaign was, “Reinforce Home Matters’ key messages through consistent communication with WKU students” (Soper et al., 2015).

The following is a checklist to assist you with writing your campaign’s strategies (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 200; Hallahan, 2003):

1. Develop a theme or major strategy for your effort that will serve as the backbone of your campaign.
2. Outline sufficient details of your strategy to include opportunities, problems, and key audiences.
3. Write the strategy in a way that can be understood quickly.
4. Capture how the strategy is a logical and imaginative solution to the problem.

5. **Remember:** Your strategies should broadly describe how you plan to achieve the corresponding objective.

*Tactics*

Just like a house is made up of rooms, a strategy is made up of tactics. Tactics are specific methods or techniques that give details on how to achieve a strategy (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 248). In addition, developing tactics can help provide a roadmap or timeline for your campaign, as well as identify all necessary tasks and related out-of-pocket expenses. There are five general categories for tactics: public media, interactive media, controlled media, events, and one-on-one communications (Hallahan, 2003).

Public media comes in two forms: publicity (unpaid) and advertising (paid) (Hallahan, 2003). Since in most cases a homelessness or homeownership awareness campaign will have a limited budget, you will want to focus your public media tactics predominately on the ways to get positive publicity through different news media, such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and internet. In order to achieve this type of publicity, you will want to find a person to contact within the news medium, provide a news release (see page 39 for sample) or written material that is newsworthy, and arrange coverage of an event or spokesperson. This type of coverage is known as earned media.

In case you do have the funds for advertising, this includes: print advertisements, broadcast commercials, billboards, fliers, sponsorships, online advertisements, and public service announcements (PSAs) (Hallahan, 2003). If you are representing a nonprofit organization and/or creating a campaign on homelessness awareness, a PSA will qualify
as an unpaid form of advertisement (Hallahan, 2003). Contact your local broadcast stations for more information and availability. Although advertisements do have associated cost, you should not hesitate to contact local businesses or even the organization you are purchasing the materials from and ask for donations. That way, you can allocate your budget in other areas.

The second form of tactics is interactive media, or media that requires some form of action by the target audience in order to receive the message (Hallahan, 2003). Interactive media has three forms: computer based, telephone based, and video based (Hallahan, 2003). Computer-based interactive media include websites, e-mail, social media, discussion groups, chats, online newsletters, webcasts, or web conferencing (Hallahan, 2003). Telephone based consist of automated telephone response systems or text messaging (Hallahan, 2003). Then, video based comprise of teleconferencing or internal video telecast (Hallahan, 2003).

While a couple years ago this type of tactic was used rarely in public relations campaigns, today interactive media, especially in regards to social media (see page 57 for more information), can create cost-effective ways to reach and engage nearly all of your target audience. According to the journalism and media research institute Pew Research Center (2012), much of the success of President Barack Obama’s 2012 campaign can be attributed to his interactive and consistent messages on social media platforms. Therefore, it is highly recommend to determine whether and what social media platforms would be effective in reaching your target audience.

The third category is controlled media. This includes: brochures, print newsletters, annual reports, books, direct mail, stuffers, presentations, entertainment,
prizes, and samples (Hallahan, 2003). In most cases, controlled media tactics are used in conjunction with other tactic groups with events being the foremost (Hallahan, 2003). When developing tactics under this category, you should think of incentives for your target audience to attend events, engage in conversation, etc. or how you will raise awareness of the incentive and your organizational goal.

The most recognized and sometimes critical of the five categories of tactics is events. Event tactics include: sweepstakes, contests, meetings, demonstrations, rallies, observations, exhibitions, fairs, speeches, trade shows, conferences, award ceremonies, carnivals, training programs, workshops, and performances (Hallahan, 2003). Since event tactics require much planning and collaboration between organizations, speakers, and your campaign team, it is suggested that you create other tactics to include advertisements, publicity, and incentives to make sure that your target audience is aware of and will attend your event. Note: See page 41 for more detailed information on events, from planning to implementation.

The last category of tactics is one-on-one communications, which is any way of creating direct dialogue between you or your campaign members and a specific person (Hallahan, 2003). This includes: personal visits, lobbying, negotiations, outreach, and counseling (Hallahan, 2003). It may also include more personal forms of postal mail, e-mail, and telephone calls than those described in previous tactic categories (Hallahan, 2003). While one-on-one communications tactics are effective in increasing understanding and changing behavior, they are time consuming and therefore costly (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 243). When creating these types of tactics, be sure that the person with whom you are communicating will be an asset in creating broader awareness in your
target audience. These persons may include opinion leaders, organizational management members, public officials, potential speakers, celebrities, and policy makers (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 243). Since one-on-one communications tactics usually deal with changing awareness, attitudes, or behaviors of individuals with influence, these tactics are usually used in conjunction with another tactic category to ensure broader impact on your target audience using this person.

The following is a checklist to use when creating tactics for your campaign (Hallahan, 2003; Cutlip et al., 2006; Guth & Marsh, 2003):

1. The tactic includes additional information not described in the corresponding strategy.
2. The tactic outlines all necessary tasks.
3. The tactic is not too wordy.
4. The tactic is worded and presented in a way that will achieve organizational and budget approval.
5. The tactic answers, “How will it reach the target audience effectively?”
6. The tactic answers, “How will it create awareness, attitude or behavioral change?”
7. The tactic either includes or corresponds to a time table with a road map for implementing.
8. The tactic identifies direct (the organization’s) expenses.
SECTION 4

ORGANIZING

While organizing and planning often go hand in hand in public relations campaigns due to their give-and-take relationship, they differ in that planning is more written and straightforward, whereas organizing is more hands on and unpredictable. For example, you may find that you have written the perfect plan for your campaign that includes speakers and the highly sought-after venue; however, after you begin contacting individuals and organizing, you realize that there are scheduling, budget, and/or other conflicts preventing every item in your plan from being implemented, which is okay.

Public relations has much uncertainty and almost always requires some sort of reevaluation. Just remember that public relations is a strategic communications process, and strategies require alterations to adapt to the context in which they are being used. Therefore, it is okay and almost expected for you to go back to the planning portion of your campaign despite already being in the organizing phase.

In this section, almost everything identified will be suggestions because you will be in control of organizing and will have the freedom to choose what you do and how you do it. However, there are many obstacles associated with organizing that you may never have faced before, especially if this is your first public relations campaign, such as writing a news release, partnership contract or media advisory. Yet, despite your level of expertise, the suggestions and applicable samples from my awareness campaign on
homelessness and homeownership will give you the knowhow if or when these obstacles arise.

**Partnering**

While finding an organization, nonprofit, or business to partner your efforts in making home a reality for all may not be a part of your original plan, it can be highly beneficial to do so. Benefits include: expanding your budget, increasing manpower and resources, and cost-effectiveness in providing special services that your organizations may not already have, moral support and more creative brainstorming (Andreasen, 1996). However, you must be sure that the relationship is a mutually beneficial one before moving into a partnership.

According to Paul Gibson (2013), a national charity and social enterprise specialist for the corporate organization Mazars, there are three warning signs when looking for a potential partner:

1. There is a conflict of interest for your organization (i.e. the target audience of the potential partner is sports fans, whereas your organization is geared toward achieving an audience interested in making home reality for all).

2. The potential partnership will result in a loss of a major donor of your organization (i.e. partnering with an organization that supports abortion could cause losing a major religious donor).

3. The potential partner supports a company that does work contrary to your organization’s mission (i.e. partnering with a business that is known for demolishing low-income neighborhoods for commercial use).
Therefore, you should look for the following when deciding whether a partnership is appropriate for your organization (Andreasen, 1996):

1. Both organizations serve the same geographic area served by your target audience.
2. There is a direct overlap of their donors or constituents and your potential market.
3. The organization has a mission that is compatible with your organization’s activities.
4. The organization is willing to make a partnership contract or agreement (sample on page 31).

After finding and consulting with your potential partner, you should always create some sort of written and signed contract or agreement to discuss expectations, requests, and any other matters of the partnership. This keeps both organizations accountable. Otherwise, future problems may arise that could be harmful or costly to your organization, such as new partnerships with conflicting interests, budget disputes, or involvement (Andreasen, 1996). According to Ana Brankovich (2013), the development officer at Yeah CIC (a social organization based in London), “partnerships are dependent on long-term sustainability and finance,” which can be indicated and ensured through a partnership agreement.

The following is a checklist to assist you in what to include in the partnership agreement (Andreasen, 1996). It should address:

1. Your expectations from the partnership.
2. Your expectations of the other organization(s) and vice versa.
3. The issues of personal and organizational bankruptcy, retirement, and changes in management.

4. How organizations will handle intellectual property such as trademarks and logos.

5. Under what conditions the agreement is void.

6. How long the agreement is in effect.
Sample Partnership Agreement. The following was made only for the purposes of this guide. It includes accurate information from the partnership between Operation: Owning the Dream and the WKU Chapter of Habitat for Humanity in Bowling Green, Kentucky (Soper et al., 2015). Note: Although the document is formally written, the important aspects of an agreement is the ease in understanding and the conditions that are provided, as well as the signature that indicates both parties’ approval.

Operation: Owning the Dream & WKU Chapter of Habitat for Humanity
Sample Partnership Agreement

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into at Western Kentucky University, this February day of 5, 2015, by and between Home Matters’ Operation: Owning the Dream and WKU Chapter of Habitat for Humanity are hereafter collectively referred to as the “Partners.”

WHEREAS, the Partners intend to collaborate to ensure that one day home will be a reality for all;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises and mutual covenants made one to the other, be it and it is hereby agreed as follows:

1. The partnership’s purpose is to collaborate efforts in increasing awareness of homelessness and the need for homeownership for all individuals. The parties here to hereby form a Partnership under the name and style of Home Matters (hereafter referred to as “the Partnership”) to carry on the Partnership business as provided herein.

2. Place of Business. The principal place of business of the Partnership shall be Western Kentucky University, 1906 College Heights Blvd, Bowling Green, KY, 42101 or such other place in the Commonwealth of Kentucky as the Partnership may hereafter, from time to time, determine.

3. Term. The Partnership shall commence as of the date of the execution of this Agreement and shall continue thereafter for a term of one month, unless sooner dissolved and terminated by agreement of the Partners.

4. Relationship of the Partners. Each Partner may have other business interests and may engage in any other business, trade, profession, or employment whatsoever on his own account or in partnership with, and he shall not be required to devote his entire time to the business of the Partnership. Each Partner shall devote such time and attention to the conduct of the business of the Partnership as shall be deemed by all of the Partners to be required for the business of the Partnership.

5. Voluntary Termination. The Partnership may be dissolved at any time, in which event the partners shall proceed with reasonable promptness to liquidate the business of the partnership. The assets of the partnership and proceeds of liquidation shall be between the Partners in the same proportion as their percentages of interest in the Partnership.

In Witness Whereof, the parties hereto have set their hands and seals the date and place first above mentioned.

____________________________             ________________
Signature of Partner                 Date

____________________________             ________________
Signature of Partner                 Date
**Sponsorships and Funding**

Sponsorships offer an alternative means of funding organizations and campaigns aside from donations and grant funding. Sponsorships can take the form of cash, free products, or services. Obtaining a sponsorship is a strategic and collaborative effort which requires organizations to reach out to key personnel to find sponsors and arrangements. Understanding how to obtain a sponsorship can help you expand your budget goals and move ahead with your project plans. Based on my experience raising funds for a high school booster club, I have found that you can attain sponsorships in four simple steps.

**Step 1.** Determine what your organization can offer in return for a sponsorship. In order to increase negotiation power, you should list a number of suggested cash amounts in return for increasingly valuable incentives. Like a partnership, this creates a mutually beneficial relationship. For example, if you are looking for sponsors for an event, you can offer second-tier sponsors the right to hang banners at the event and offer first-tier sponsors a chance to promote their brand on your event advertising materials and hang banners. Often publications will offer advertising space as part of their sponsorship in exchange for an honorable mention at the event.

**Step 2.** Make a list of organizations whose mission and/or target audience align with your organization or campaign. Approach your potential sponsor from his or her point of view to maximize your effectiveness. Think about how the sponsorship can benefit the sponsors' reputation and public relations strategies to meet their target audience. For a homeless campaign, you may consider targeting food manufacturers, clothing distributors, and community banks.
**Step 3.** Create a timeline for approaching selected organizations. A solid timeline can ensure that you cover all potential sponsors before funding is needed. Be sure to narrow your list to allow plenty of time to reach out to and work closely with the organizations. If your list is too long, you may be spreading your time too thin and lose potential sponsors who might have been persuaded with a little extra attention.

**Step 4.** Develop individual proposals for each potential sponsor, and find a person of contact in each organization with the authority to make sponsorship decisions. Since this is a negotiation, you must be willing and prepared to work with sponsors to adjust your incentives. For instance, if a potential sponsor wants an additional advertising presence during your campaign not originally included in the proposal, then you might consider an exception depending on the added value of having this particular sponsorship.

Aside from sponsorships, another route for funding is grants. Grants refer to the process of transferring of money from one entity to another, usually nonprofits or research institutes, to support the organization’s mission and efforts (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 451). The best way to find grants for which your organization or campaign may qualify is to use online search engines or governmental websites, such as www.Grants.gov. Each grant will give detailed information on qualified applicants and organizations for funding. It is important to directly address these qualifications in your grant letter proposal using similar language and verb usage to make it clear that your organization is qualified (see sample grant proposal on page 34).
Sample Grant Letter Proposal. The proposal below was created for the purposes of this guide. Note: The proposal takes the form of a traditional letter and clearly describes the organization and its mission. In addition, you should quantify your efforts and objectives because agencies want to know exactly how their funds will be used to benefit your organization and exactly what kind of change is expected. In the case that you receive a grant, the quantified results will advantage you for the subsequent year’s reapplication.

OPERATION: OWNING THE DREAM
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
1906 COLLEGE HEIGHTS BLVD,
BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101
(000) 000-0000

February 19, 2015

XYZ Foundation
1234 Elm Street
Beverly Hills, 90210

RE: OWNING THE DREAM! PROJECT

Operation: Owning the Dream in Bowling Green, Kentucky is seeking a grant to spread awareness about homelessness in the community and promote the education and concept of homeownership for all. After conducting a survey among the student leaders of Western Kentucky University, Operation: Owning the Dream found that students thought homelessness was a national issue but could not localize it to Kentucky or Bowling Green.

As a way to increase awareness of homelessness in Bowling Green and Kentucky, we hope to hold a series of workshops for students to learn about the issues of poverty and existing organizations they can join to reduce homelessness and its effects. Funding in the amount of $1,300 will allow for the supplies needed to conduct this workshop, as well as fund the promotional videos and advertisements for the campaign.

Western Kentucky University has a student body of more than 20,000 students with nearly 3,000 being involved in leadership through Greek organizations. If we can influence the involvement of the socially engaged students in Greek organizations to participate in homelessness prevention, while educating them of societal benefits for providing homes for everyone, we can increase the community’s quality of education, safety, economy, health and personal success.

The workshops will include guest speakers from the community to discuss personal ties to homelessness/homeownership or community service opportunities for chapters, as well as interactive activities to invite long-term conversation of the issue. We hope to spread the message to individuals outside of the workshop through social media videos, pictures and text.

We appreciate the XYZ Foundation taking an interest in helping Operation: Owning the Dream implement a campaign that will help our community prosper. Please give me a call at (000) 000-0000 if you require any further information.

Cordially,

Blake Soper
Home Matters PR. Coordinator
PRSSA Member

Attachment
Promotion

Promotion is what public relations is all about, and there are entire textbooks dedicated to promotion; however, due to the purposes of this guide and your need to implement a successful homelessness or homeownership awareness campaign, I am going to give you the bare bones and address general concerns associated with promotion.

Contact everyone. This includes both organizational contacts and your own. For a successful campaign, you want to be sure that you have searched all doors for all available opportunities. Note: There is a difference between contacting and harassing. The line is crossed when the person displays an obvious sign of disinterest or you have not given reasonable time for an individual to respond. Yet, contacting individuals, even those you may not see as helpful, can either give you valuable insights or connect you with a person who can. Spreading general awareness to all of your contacts either directly or through newsletters about your organization and upcoming events can be valuable in encouraging attendance.

Use social media. Post your campaign to social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and anywhere else friends, family, business colleagues, and your target audience can see it. They can support the campaign and share, retweet, or like the post, spreading the reach of your campaign in a rippling effect (additional information available on page 57).

Be active in your campaign. Although this may seem obvious, you must be actively involved in your campaign throughout all stages regardless of the time frame. This involvement can include hanging fliers at every location you visit or discussing it
with people one-on-one at every chance. There are many ways that you can incorporate the campaign into your life as a way to promote it. If you are willing to invest the time into your campaign to succeed, then others will notice and your results will reflect.

**Contact news media.** The cheapest way to reach your target audience and receive more authority over your campaign’s topic is to receive a feature, airtime, or mention in a newspaper or in TV/radio broadcast. You can achieve this by providing a person of contact within a news outlet with a news release (see page 39) or a media advisory (see page 49). A news release, often referred to as a press release, is a prepared written document addressed to the members of the news media to persuade them why your campaign, upcoming event, etc. is newsworthy and therefore should be featured in their broadcast or publication (Guth & Marsh, 2003). A media advisory is also used to send newsworthy information to the members of the media; however, the information is highly specific, tends to deal with events and serves as an invitation for journalists to attend (Guth & Marsh, 2003, p. 277). News releases and media advisories should be made and sent at every opportunity.

According to Ken McGaffin (2015), a senior marketing and creative content public relations consultant for the past decade, content is newsworthy when it has people or human interest, contains statistics, opinions, controversy, innovation, and interesting relevant information, as well as has appropriate timing and proximity to the audience of the broadcast or publication.

The following is a checklist to assist you in creating a newsworthy news release (Guth & Marsh, 2003; Diggs-Brown, 2013, pp. 137-147):

1. It includes your contact information.
2. It includes the words “NEWS RELEASE” at the top left corner of the document.

3. It contains an active-voice headline and subline that is informative and grabs attention.

4. The first paragraph gets right to the point and identifies the who, what, when, where, why questions.

5. It includes statistics.

6. It includes quotations from guest speakers, organization leaders, opinion leaders, or other persons involved in the campaign.

7. The spelling and punctuation is flawless.

8. The news release is no longer than two pages.

9. It provides links and contacts for more information.

10. It has a boilerplate, or a statement that concludes the news release that sums up the organization’s goal, mission, etc. in one paragraph (you will need one for each organization discussed or quoted).

11. It contains the organization’s letterhead, if applicable.

The following is a checklist to assist you in creating a newsworthy media advisory (Diggs-Brown, 2013, pp. 207-208):

1. It includes the words “MEDIA ADVISORY” in all caps at the top of the document.

2. It includes your contact information.

3. The headline grabs attention, accurately conveys the event, and uses strong verbs.

4. The document addresses the who, what, when, where, why questions.
5. It indicates whether or not there will be photo or video opportunities.

6. It describes any individuals who will be available for one-on-one interviews.

7. It indicates who to contact for interviews.

8. It contains the organization’s letterhead, if applicable.
Sample News Release. The following news release was used in my Home Matters awareness campaign in Bowling Green and sent to The WKU Herald (Soper et al., 2015). Note: The news release contains a headline underlined and in all caps with a strong verb. It is also important to clearly state the location and date. If you have more than one page, then be sure to include “more” in the footer of the first page.

LOCAL CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO JOIN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Awareness for Homeownership and Against Homelessness

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (Feb. 1, 2015) — Home Matters, a national non-profit organization dedicated to reducing homelessness and increasing homeownership, affordable rent and quality of communities, has begun a local awareness campaign with the WKU student body as its focus. WKU students have launched a month-long campaign to encourage awareness and activism in the Home Matters movement as part of a national competition through PRSSA, known as the Bateman competition. Although there are four teams from WKU competing in the competition, only two are using the WKU student body as their target audience.

On Tuesday, February 10 at 7 p.m. in DSU room 3002, a four-member WKU public relations group representing Home Matters, known as “Operation: Owning the Dream,” will be hosting a workshop open to all WKU students. The workshop will raise awareness of the homelessness situation in Warren County and provide students with information of how to join existing organizations in Bowling Green that address this issue. The workshop will include guest speakers, such as the Coalition of Renters Rights, and interactive activities.

On Tuesday, February 17 at 7 p.m. in DSU room 3024, Operation: Owning the Dream will be hosting a second workshop informing attendees on how to achieve the “American Dream” of homeownership. This session will look at the details of how to become a homeowner,

---more---
Sample News Release continued. As you can see, the document includes “page 2 of 2” at the top of this page to identify that the release is multiple pages. At the bottom, you will notice the contact information for receiving additional information is provided, followed by the boilerplate, which is used to summarize the organization(s) mentioned for journalists.

such as budgeting and programs. It will also take look at how homeownership is more than just a personal achievement. According to Home Matters, “It is a societal need that all citizens should achieve at some point in their lives due to the health, educational, economic, and safety benefits, among others, it provides.”

The local Home Matters campaign is partnering with the WKU chapter of Habitat for Humanity. “Since the local 2015 Home Matters campaign will be a month in duration, the members of Operation: Owning the Dream are hoping the collaboration will create a lasting impact past the campaign dates by providing an existing WKU organization with similar goals for WKU students to take part,” said Operation: Owning the Dream public relations coordinator Blake Soper.

While the Home Matters team, Operation: Owning the Dream, will be hosting two workshops, it also plans to inform the WKU student body to its activism against homelessness and for homeownership through a separate social media campaign. Students can connect to the movement by liking our page on Facebook at Operation: WKU Home Matters and following us on Twitter and Instagram @OperationWKU for exciting new updates, videos and prizes.

For more information, contact Blake Soper at (000) 000-0000 or Blake.soper@email.com.

About Home Matters
The Home Matters© (www.HomeMattersAmerica.com) movement was launched in 2013 by a group of visionary housing professionals and leaders that identified a gap in public discourse. Fundamental social challenges in our nation – from health to education to public safety, the economy and individual success – all have a common denominator: their connection to Home. With a high-level, holistic approach to housing, Home Matters underlines the link between Home and these core societal issues such as health, education, safety, individual success and the economy.

-##-
Events

As you may now realize, events can take months of planning depending on the magnitude. However, they can be effective in creating long-term awareness in your target audience as well as changing attitudes. Just imagine, if a person is having a great time at the carnival that you created to raise funds for homelessness prevention, then he or she will likely associate his or her positive attitude and happiness to your organization and/or its goal. Therefore, he or she will likely think and speak kindly of your campaign.

Since event planning is long term, you can break down the process by separating your efforts into four time frames: months ahead, two weeks before, the day before, and the day of the event. In order to organize and simplify this process, each time frame will have its own checklist with a brief description of bullet points.

**Months ahead of the event checklist** (Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 325-335; Soper et al., 2015):

1. *Define the event’s purpose.* This can be as simple as writing a couple of sentences to describing why you want to have this event (i.e. fundraising, award recognition, celebration, or education).

2. *Set objectives.* As with everything else in a public relations campaign, you want to be able to measure the success of your event. Set a couple of objectives to assess this (see page 17 on how to build objectives).

3. *Gather volunteers.* While you think that you may be able to plan and implement a successful event on your own, you can’t, nor would you want to do that to yourself. Gathering volunteers with different skills can help you in areas that
range from balancing your budget to creating advertisements (see page 53 on recruiting volunteers).

4. **Prepare a budget.** Since you are likely working for an organization on a tight budget, it is important to allocate costs associated with this events ahead of time, so that you have plenty of time to either reduce them or raise funds (see page 32 on sponsorships and funds).

5. **Schedule a time and place.** Be sure that the time and location are convenient for most of your target audience.

6. **Think about promotion.** Not only should you be deciding how you will promote this event (see page 35 on promotion), you should also be looking at the content (i.e. date, time, location, venue, special guests, etc.).

**Two weeks before the event checklist** (Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 325-335; Soper et al., 2015):

1. **Make confirmations on everything.** While someone said that he or she was available for the event months ago, he or she may have forgot and scheduled something for the same day. Be sure you contact everyone by sending him or her a reminder of his or her attendance at your event and check venue, caterer, staff, and promotions to make sure everything is still a go.

2. **Reevaluate budget.** Make sure you were either able to get your needed budget approved or were able to raise appropriate funding.

3. **Assign roles.** Again, you cannot do everything yourself in preparation for an event. Delegating roles can help take some stress off your back and create a mega-event (see page 55 on assigning roles).
4. *Do not forget social media and websites.* Be sure to update your organization’s website and social media accounts on the upcoming event.

5. *Begin promotions.* At this point, your campaign promotions should be designed and in effect.

6. *Start gathering materials for the event.* You want to go ahead and gather the donated supplies and buy what you need because it will save you time closer to event day. This includes tables, chairs, sound system, tablecloths, etc.

7. *Arrange media.* In addition to news media (see page 62), you want to have photos and videos to share online and use as proof to justify your budget to grant funders and management.

8. *Visit the venue.* While you may have already done so, you want to double check the venue to make sure that things like parking, restrooms, and lighting will be sufficient for your upcoming event.

**Day before the event checklist** (Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 325-335; Soper et al., 2015):

1. *Check in with your team.* Make sure everyone is on the same page by knowing how to contact one another, what his or her role is, where the venue is, and at what time he or she should be there.

2. *Check RSVPs, if applicable.* Knowing the head count can help you prepare by making last-minute adjustments, but remember that although 100 people RSVP, you may get 10 or 500 to show.

3. *Make sure everything is ready at the venue.* Actually go to the venue and look to see if everything is ready.
4. *Make sure either you or the venue has a safety kit.* No matter the event type, accidents happen, and it is good to be prepared when they do.

5. *Prepare an agenda.* Include a detailed list of times, rooms, and other necessary information for your event, but the key is that it is easy to read and informative.

6. *Make a checklist.* Make a list of everything that either still needs to be done or items that need to be taken to the venue. This will help your team remember everything even under the stress of event day.

**Day of the event checklist** (Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 325-335; Soper et al., 2015):

1. *Arrive early to the venue.* Tell everyone helping including yourself to arrive earlier than actually needed to compensate for stragglers.

2. *Set up everything.*

3. *Stay informed.* Rarely do events go as planned, so to deviate from the schedule in a way that is least distracting make sure to inform anyone who needs to be informed about last-minute changes.

4. *Take photos and videos.* While this will likely not be your job, someone should be taking photos or videos for future promotion or record keeping.

5. *Create a call to action.* While you have your guests’ attention, you should talk about your organization, its mission, and what they should do to get involved. This is often the part where you are acting upon the purpose of the event (i.e. link to our social media accounts, volunteer at our organization, lobby at the capital, donate to our organization, etc.)

6. *Give a takeaway.* Do not leave your guests empty handed. Be sure that they have something to make them reflect on your event and campaign.
7. *Clean.* Always leave a venue better than when you came because you want to preserve all relationships. The venue management may even give your organization a deal for a future event.

8. *Thank everyone.* This can range from a personal phone call to a letter of thanks sent to individuals who helped, donated, or had an impact on the success of the event.

9. *Conduct a post-evaluation.* This includes determining the success of your objectives that you created for the event (see page 60 on evaluating objectives), identifying positives and negatives, discussing how you can make it better next time, and determining your budget.

_Suggested Activities and Ideas_

The following is a list of activities and ideas that can be included in your campaign for homelessness awareness or homeownership process and programs (National Coalition for Homeless, 2013; Soper et al., 2015; Poverty USA, 2011). However, do not hesitate to create or search for new activities or ideas. The Internet is full of them.

- Organize a “One Night without a Home” sleep out to raise awareness of homeless conditions in the community and simulate an authentic experience for participants (for more details, see Appendix, p. 80).

- Host educational forums or workshops on homelessness or homeownership. Invite speakers, such as individuals who have experienced homelessness, individuals who have worked directly with homeless people or individuals with extensive
knowledge on the topic academically. Visit www.homematters.com or www.nationalhomeless.com for videos or informational material to distribute.

- Organize a movie night with films or documentaries that feature the importance of home or the effects of homelessness. Keep in mind that this event can serve many purposes, such as have attendees bring a non-perishable item to donate for admission. Be sure to include the community as well by contacting local businesses and organizations to encourage donations for supplies needed.

- Organize a book reading or discussion group. For ideas for books, you should look into the community and local resources to see if anyone has written on homelessness or homeownership and would be willing to host a book reading.

- Organize a potluck dinner where community members bring a dish to feed themselves and three additional people. Invite members of the community who have experienced homelessness as guests to encourage community interaction. In regards to location, it is best to keep the site neutral, so choose places with no religious or political affiliation.

- Arrange a Community Service Day where individuals can volunteer at different local organizations and learn about the activities done there. Suggested places include: food pantries, homeless shelters, low-income housing, soup kitchens, and activist group headquarters.

- Organize a local cardboard protest in your community. Encourage citizens and students to create cardboard signs addressing the issues of homelessness and take to the streets to raise awareness for the importance of ending homelessness.
• Host an Open-Mic Night in a community space. Invite community members to come and share poetry, prose and thoughts with home being the topic of focus.

• Organize a “We Are All Homeless” event in your community, during which non-homeless individuals hold up signs asking for money in order to raise awareness about homelessness. Volunteers can also give out information directing individuals to local homelessness charities and services.

• Organize a “Living in a Car” event in which volunteers take shifts living in a car for twenty-four hours in a public area to simulate how some homeless live and to raise awareness. Follow the link for an example: www.tcpalm.com/ugc/indian-river-county-ugc/hfc-joins-national-hunger-and-homelessness-awarene.

• Sponsor a bake sale, cook-off, or raffle for donations and spread awareness.

• Organize a collection of non-perishable items such as food, hygiene products, clothing, blankets, books, toys, etc. at a local business. Make it a competition with incentives for the business that collects the most items. Be sure to contact local service providers to determine items that are most needed in the community.

• Sponsor a benefit concert with local musicians. Be sure to contact local businesses for donations in supplies, food, and other needed items.

• Arrange a walk or a run. Set a minimum participant fee, such as $20 per participant. Encourage local businesses to donate food and drinks. Encourage local bands to provide entertainment.

• Sponsor a gallery night by selling artwork created by homeless individuals. Proceeds can be given directly to the homeless whose artwork is being sold.
• Gather a group of students, citizens, and homeless or formerly homeless individuals and visit your city hall, county commission, state legislature, or a local office of your congressional representative or senator. Focus on educating your audience on issues concerning homelessness and what ideas you have to better the situation. (See page 70 for more information on lobbying.)

• Have a booth where people can write to their Congressional representatives about the importance of programs for homeless people.

• Have people come together and discuss the issues surrounding homelessness. Then have them write their opinions in Letters to the Editor in their local, state, and national newspapers.

• Implement creative and engaging material activities into your events to increase participation and awareness. For activities, games, and other engaging material on the effects of poverty and housing conditions, you can visit www.povertyusa.org/poverty-resources/education-center/. An activity that was used in my campaign on homelessness and lack-of-adequate housing campaign is called “The Stack of the Deck” and can be found in the Appendix on page 74.

Remember that all of these ideas and activities are only suggestions and can be copied, adapted, or combined to create the perfect fit for your campaign. Keep in mind that there a numerous resources online that share suggestions for engaging activities. In public relations, if you see a great action or activity, then copy it.
Sample Media Advisory. The following is a media advisory that was made for the purpose of this guide; however, the information included directly reflects accurate information from the Operation: Owning the Dream campaign (Soper et al., 2015). Note: The media advisory is only one page and has “###” to indicate the end of it.

MEDIADVISORY

FORIMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 01, 2015

CONTACT: Blaise Soper
PR Coordinator
(000) 000-0000
BlaiseSoper@wk.com

PHOTO/INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES
Home Matters to Everyone: Homelessness in Bowling Green by Operation: Owning the Dream

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Home Matters Operation: Owning the Dream first workshop will begin on February 10, 2015.

WHO: Home Matters Operation: Owning the Dream
Jay Todd Richey, Founder of Student Coalition of Renters’ Rights
Mark Manning, WKU Real Estate Professor

WHAT: “Home Matters to Everyone: Homelessness in Bowling Green”
The first Home Matters workshop includes two guest speakers discussing the current home conditions and market in Bowling Green. The workshop will include an interactive on poverty and budgeting.

WHEN: The workshop begins is February 10 at 7 p.m. ***

WHERE: 1906 College Heights Blvd.
WKU Downing Student Union Room 3004
At the corner of University Blvd. and Creason St.
Turn left onto University Blvd.
Turn right onto College Heights Blvd.
DSU will be on the left just passed Subway.

*** To schedule interviews, contact name and name at (000) 000-0000. Operation: Owning the Dream will make remarks at 7 p.m., February 10.

###
Guest Speakers

According to the Association for Psychological Science, although attaining a guest speaker can be more time consuming than speaking on the issue yourself, “someone with expertise in a particular area will be better at communicating the subtleties of the topic from a position of authority” (Mullins, 2001). In other words, your target audience might trust or find the speaker more reliable than you or your colleagues due to his or her credentials or authority. Sometimes, a guest speaker might be a better choice simply because he or she is a good speaker. Regardless, a guest speakers can give new perspectives and create multiple opportunities for your campaign, such as promotions or donations.

When deciding on a guest speaker, there are several criteria that you can use; however, for a homelessness awareness and homeownership campaign, you should find:

- Someone familiar with your message
- Someone who is proficient at speaking, such as a celebrity or an expert in the area
- Someone who will come at no cost or fits within your budget
- Someone who can testify firsthand experience (i.e. previously homeless individual or a director of a homeless shelter)
- Someone who your target audience will be able to relate to or understand

Once you have created a list of potential speakers, you must go through five steps in order to ensure the perfect fit (Soper et al., 2015):

**Step 1.** You must establish the date, time, and place of your event. If you do not have all of these, then you can possibly waste time and resources meeting with
individuals who already have plans on your event date. **Remember:** Deadlines present a sense of urgency and will give your organization more authority to schedule speakers.

**Step 2.** You should use your resources and established contacts to get in contact with a potential speaker. Personal referrals are a great way to narrow your search and find recommendations. In most cases, it will also ensure that the potential speaker will be willing to work with you and donate time to speak.

**Step 3.** Review your options and interview potential speakers. A professional speaker will be a partner and an advocate of your event throughout the process. Often, they will ask questions about the needs of your audience, what they can accomplish for you and how they can help ensure that your audience is present at the event. You want a speaker who will be willing to take interviews and questions from the news media to promote your event.

If their speaking skills are a concern for you, then ask your candidates for references, or if they are speaking in your area, follow up by asking if you can attend the program and observe them in action. In addition, confirm that the potential speaker has addressed groups similar to yours or will be willing and able to tailor his or her presentation to your target audience.

**Step 4.** Select your speaker(s). After determining that the speaker fits your criteria, you must, again, confirm that he or she is available to speak on the scheduled event. Depending on the speaker, you may want to create a contract or agreement that outlines both parties’ expectations, fees, accommodations, photography, news media requirements, interviewing, arrival time, etc. Yet, you must be willing to work with the speaker on things because your relationship with that person is like a partnership.
**Step 5.** Evaluate the speaker’s performance at the event. Since it is likely you will be hosting several events either in your campaign or in the future, you want to know whether or not your speaker was effective with your target audience to determine if you want to use him or her again. You can either engage your audience with a survey at the event or simply use your judgment and the verbal judgment of guests.
SECTION 5

IMPLEMENTING

If you have thoroughly planned and organized your campaign, then the implementation phase should be the easiest; however, it is also one of the most unpredictable. As you will discover, the weather may not be cooperative, speakers may cancel, volunteers may quit, and your venue may change. All of these things are uncontrollable, but being prepared and actively involved will allow you to turn a challenge into an opportunity. While other sections may be more useful for adjusting, this section will be useful in allowing you to continue with your campaign assuming there are no major setbacks, which, fingers crossed, will be the case.

Recruiting Volunteers

It may be your initial instinct to start frantically searching for volunteers for an upcoming event or for your organization; however, before doing so, you should have established clear roles for these volunteers. While it can be a nightmare to not have enough volunteers at some points, an even worse scenario is having volunteers with nothing to do. Remember: You want to leave a positive impact on volunteers not only because you want them to come back, but also because you want them to share their positive experience at the organization with their friends and family, who can help raise awareness of your organization and increase the number of volunteers in the future.
Once you have established roles for volunteers, you are ready for recruitment. According to Joanne Fritz (n.d.), a charitable organization expert who has served in the field for more than 30 years, there are three basic ways to recruit: warm body recruitment, targeted recruitment, and concentric circles recruitment.

Warm body recruitment refers to the need of a large number of volunteers for a short period of time (Fritz, n.d.). This would be the case if you just needed a lot of manpower to set up an event, such as a carnival. In order to recruit in this way, you simply advertise any way possible because you want to reach a broad audience (Fritz, n.d.). This includes brochures, posters, news media, social media, word of mouth and speaking to groups.

Targeted recruitment refers to when you need a small number of volunteers that have a particular interest, an uncommonly found characteristic, or a specific skill set (Fritz, n.d.). Unlike warm body recruitment, targeted recruitment requires targeting specific individuals, not broad groups (Fritz, n.d.). You will identify what type of individuals you need and therefore be able to target them directly after answering the following questions (Fritz, n.d.): Who do you need? Who could provide this? How can we communicate with them? What would motivate them?

Concentric circles recruitment is a complex way of saying that you want to recruit volunteers who are familiar with your organization and its goals (Fritz, n.d.). These people might include your relatives and friends, your current staff members’ relatives and friends, people in close proximity to the organization, and people who have been affected by homelessness. The advantage of this type of recruitment is that people will likely be
more willing to volunteer than those who are completely unfamiliar with the organization or its staff (Fritz, n.d.).

Despite your recruitment method, you should be sure that your message in promoting the volunteer position(s) should be compelling by explaining the need and the benefits associated with filling it (Fritz, n.d.). It may be useful to create a recruitment message document that clearly states volunteer roles, expectations, benefits, and time commitment (Fritz, n.d.).

Assigning Roles

In any group or team inside or outside of the work place, members assume a variety of roles to create effective projects either by leading, listening, taking notes, contributing ideas, or encouraging. Although roles can easily be changed or sometimes overlap, it is good to assign roles to ensure that members are aware of their responsibilities, practice those skills, and create effective and efficient campaigns.

According to the Wellstone campaign outline (n.d.), an organization that has sought to increase civic engagement for the past 10 years, there are eight types of roles to assign in an effective campaign. Note: Depending on the campaign’s size, one person may hold many of these roles or even a volunteer could hold a role.

1. Campaign Manager—this person looks over all aspects of the campaign (Wellstone, n.d.). This position is often carried by the public relations coordinator. Duties include: managing day-to-day operations, hiring and managing staff, coordinating fundraising, and responsible for creating and managing campaign budget (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: excellent organizational skills, good communication skills, and good interpersonal skills (Wellstone, n.d.).
2. Finance Director/Fundraiser—the sole function of this position is to raise funds (Wellstone, n.d.). Duties include: contacting potential and previous donors, applying for grants, and overseeing all fundraising events (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: highly organized, outgoing, excellent communication skills through multiple media channels, and self-motivated (Wellstone, n.d.).

3. Communications Director—this person is in charge of all of the campaign’s interaction with the news media (Wellstone, n.d.). Duties include: building relationships with the news media, creating news releases and media advisories, communicating with the news media as the key spokesperson for the organization, setting up interviews, and identifying news media opportunities for the campaign (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: prior experience working with the news media and excellent communication skills (Wellstone, n.d.).

4. Campaign Treasurer—this position oversees the financial and accounting aspect of the campaign (Wellstone, n.d.). Duties include: maintaining financial records, monitoring contributions, and creating and balancing the budget (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: significant financial and accounting experience (Wellstone, n.d.).

5. Volunteer Coordinator—this person works closely with the Campaign Manager to recruit and manage volunteers to help with various campaign tasks (Wellstone, n.d.). Duties include: coordinating the work of volunteers and finding appropriate volunteers to fulfill needed campaign duties (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: patience, strong interpersonal skills, enthusiasm, persistence, good
communication skills, and the ability to work with a diverse group of individuals (Wellstone, n.d.).

6. **Scheduler**—this person is responsible for creating and organizing the schedule of the campaign (Wellstone, n.d.). Often, this position is also held by the Campaign Manager. Duties include: accepting and acting on all invitations, seeking out potential events, creating a time table, and coordinating with staff, key donors, and speakers to create appropriate event and meeting schedules (Wellstone, n.d.).

7. **Technology Manager**—this person coordinates and manages all technological aspects of the campaign (Wellstone, n.d.). Duties include: maintaining the campaign’s and/or organization’s website, creating a computer network for staff, managing social media accounts, creating and editing advertisements or videos, and acting as technical help for events (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: broad knowledge of technology, computers and software, able to work in a fast-paced environment, and have previous experience (Wellstone, n.d.).

8. **Office Manager**—this person is in charge of secretarial work, maintaining the campaign headquarters, and coordinating administrative duties (Wellstone, n.d.). Duties include: managing staff, infrastructure, supplies, contacts, guest speakers, and numerous other details (Wellstone, n.d.). Position requirements: an understanding of the entire campaign, ability to problem solve, and good organizational skills (Wellstone, n.d.).

**Social Media**

According to the Pew Research Center (2014), 74 percent of all Internet users have at least one social media account. With numbers this high and the low associated
costs, your campaign should almost always include social media as a tactic. In addition to incorporating newsworthy information into your posts and tweets, you should also consider other opportunities to increase your readership, shares and reach on social media.

The following is a list of suggestions to help maximize your effectiveness on social media (Soper et al., 2015; Vanderschmitt, 2012, pp. 33-47):

1. Be sure that all post and tweets are compatible with mobile application, such as length, links, photos, and videos.
2. Share your social media accounts through all promotions, such as fliers, ads, websites, other social media accounts, and newsletters.
3. Use consistent messages and design throughout social media accounts and other promotions.
4. Encourage interaction with your posts, such as “Like if you want to win.”
5. Use hashtags in your posts and tweets so that people can easily search your campaign.
6. Create hashtags that are unique to your campaign to track your campaign’s efforts and digital dialogue.
7. Tag other Facebook pages of other organizations that are mentioned in your post; it will increase the number of people the post will reach.
8. Incorporate photos and videos into your posts whenever possible.
9. Post up-to-date information to your accounts to keep interaction and maintain awareness.
10. Create incentives for users to interact, share, retweet, etc. with your pages, posts, and tweets.

11. If you create some kind of incentive that involves winning a prize, then be sure to post and tweet about the winner with an image to increase credibility.

12. Use Facebook advertisements and “boost” important posts. While this is not free, there are affordable options that get your posts and pages to reach almost your entire target audience, which can help raise initial awareness for your campaign.

13. Do cross promotions by asking other organizations with similar missions or interests to share your page and posts.

14. Use images with people and then tag them in the photos to increase reach of posts.

15. Participate and interact with your audience by responding to posts and related tweets.

16. Be sure to post both information about the campaign and information that pertains to your objectives.

17. Share news media coverage of your campaign and relevant material on your social media accounts, such as homelessness coverage and the home-buying market.
SECTION 6

EVALUATING

Evaluation can come at any point in the campaign; however, you should be aware of these dates due to the clear time frames set by each objective. As you may suspect, the biggest and most in-depth evaluation will come at the end of your campaign when you evaluate remaining objectives, news media, social media and the campaign in general. Yet, this should not keep you from evaluating those objectives along the way to track your campaign’s effectiveness while you have time to make adjustments. This section will aid you in how to evaluate different aspects of your campaign and what the results mean for your campaign.

Objectives

Deciding on how to determine your objective’s success will largely depend on the type of objective and how the objective is quantified. If you recall, there are three types of objectives: awareness, attitudinal, and behavioral (see page 17 on objectives) (Hallahan, 2003). In most cases, awareness and attitudinal objectives can be assessed with surveys; however, behavioral objectives usually require actual observations to ensure their accuracy, such as counting individuals in attendance or responses to social media posts. Regardless, you should already established how you will measure each objective when you created it.
In the case you distributed surveys to measure objectives, you will compare your pre-campaign survey results to the post-campaign survey results and calculate the percent change. **Remember:** Both surveys should be identical to ensure that the only possible change was awareness or attitudes of the respondents. However, you do not need to survey the same individuals in the post-survey as you did in the pre-survey to obtain valid and reliable information. If your survey is as random as possible among your target audience, then your results should be generalizable to that audience (Guth & Marsh, 2003).

After calculating and quantifying the results, it is time to determine what the numbers mean. While you know whether you met, exceeded, or fell short of your objective, the proximity to it can tell you a lot about the objective you are measuring, your tactics’ effectiveness, and if your expectations for your campaign were realistic. If you met an objective, you should celebrate because that means you effectively set an appropriate objective, implemented your associated tactics, and created your desired change in your target audience.

If you exceeded your objective, then it can mean one of two things: 1) the objective was set too modestly or 2) the objective’s message was thoroughly, consistently, and successfully used in your campaign to create more change in your target audience than expected. Either way, you should be happy with this success.

In the case that you fall short of meeting your objective, you should not feel discouraged. It could be possible that you set your objective too high. You can notice this if you did achieve positive change in your objective but did not quite meet your expected goal. If there was little or no change, then you might consider changing tactics or your
campaign’s message in the future. The tactics may not have been effective in reaching your audience or your message may have been too complicated to be interpreted. **Note:**

Campaigns are a learning experience in that you can use your evaluations (positive or negative) and knowledge gained to create a better, more effective campaign next time.

*News Media*

Since news media is an effective and low-cost way to reach your target audience, it should have been an integral part of your campaign represented either through objectives or tactics. However, evaluating news media coverage is slightly different than other objectives because there are multiple dimensions, such as the number of articles, tone of the coverage, and its reach.

When determining the coverage of your campaign, you should first look into the publications and broadcast stations that you strategically contacted to establish earned media coverage. This can be done by purchasing and reading publications during your campaign, watching selected broadcast stations for expected coverage, and/or searching online for coverage. In regards to all other coverage that was perhaps unexpected, you will likely be able to find your campaign’s coverage by searching online depending on your location and the type of news media coverage.

After compiling your news media coverage, it is time for interpretation. While an objective may have been to secure 10 news articles in news publications and your campaign may have successfully done so, the individual articles’ contents are more integral to your campaign’s success or failure. For example, British Petroleum, or BP, received tons of media coverage during the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico; however, all of the coverage actually harmed the organization’s business due to the negative
context of the coverage (Webb & Bawden, 2011). Therefore, you want to make sure that your organization’s campaign is having positive coverage and getting the message you want across to your target audience. There are many different aspects to consider when analyzing news coverage.

The following is a list of questions to ask yourself when analyzing news media coverage (AMEC, n.d.; Soper et al., 2015):

1. Which media covered the issue?
2. Did you contact this publication or broadcast for the coverage?
3. What was its audience in terms of size and demographics?
4. Which of your target audiences did it reach?
5. Which of your key messages did it communicate?
6. Which of your objectives did it contribute to?
7. How positive was it?
8. How accurate was it?
9. How negative was it?
10. How inaccurate was it?
11. What was the reaction to it?
12. Where did it appear in the publication?
13. Was it repeated in other (especially online) media or other forums?
14. Was the coverage picked up and reacted to by other media?

After analyzing your news media coverage, you will now have an understanding of your effectiveness of reaching out to the media. If you received the desired coverage in a positive context, then keep doing what you are doing. If you did not receive your
desired results, then you should reconsider in the future how to structure your news releases, the person of contact within the news source, and/or how you propose your key messages in your campaign.

Events

After the event is over, it is time to start evaluating your success and determine the things you can improve to help jumpstart preparations for your next event. Be sure to evaluate within a week of the event with your staff and volunteers because memories are quick to fade.

In addition to evaluating the objectives associated with the event, you should look at several other factors to determine the event’s success, such as budget and cohesion. For example, you should discuss the positives and negatives of each aspect of the event with your staff and volunteers. These include: venue, entertainment, food and beverages, timelines, arrangements, volunteer assignments, registration, general event flow, opportunities for improvements, successes, and failures (Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 364-367). Even if the event had a lot that went wrong, you should make sure to take this opportunity and determine with the staff exactly how to make sure the next one goes better. Possible solutions may include a longer planning period, more funding, or different strategies for promotion (Cutlip et al., 2006). By making a list of challenges and possible solutions, you can help yourself in the future decide which solutions are possible and prioritize improvements for the event.

After getting feedback from your team and volunteers, you should then turn to the attendees, who could be donors or your target audience. One good way of getting feedback is through a feedback form or survey. As a way to get feedback from your
target audience or guests, you can create incentives, such as gift vouchers that can be redeemed when filled out and given back to an attendant. Incentives are usually required to get feedback because people are generally reluctant to give any feedback, especially when it is documented. Possible questions you can include on your form are (Soper et al., 2015):

1. Did you enjoy the event? If no, then please state the reason.
2. What did you like most in the event?
3. What did you like least in the event?
4. What could have been done differently to make this event better?
5. How do you rate the various services (specify service) provided by us (please circle one of the options): excellent, good, average, poor.
6. Would you come to our next event?

Note: The form should have no more than 10 questions. Ask only relevant questions and keep the questionnaire as short as possible to maximize participation. Be sure to end the form by thanking your guest for his or her participation.

Social Media

Like every other tactic in a public relations campaign, you will want to measure effectiveness, and social media is no exception. Measuring all of the social media activities that occur will give you an idea of which ones are successful and which are not. This allows you to either make improvements or toss out what does not work. In fact, an advantage of a social media campaign is that you will be able more accurately to measure its success and effectiveness due to its digital nature and preserved history. Four things
You will want to evaluate specifically with social media are reach and exposure, engagement, sentiment analysis, and influence (AMEC, n.d.).

**Reach and exposure.** Knowing the reach and exposure of your social media is helpful because it lets you know whether or not you were reaching your target audience (AMEC, n.d.). If you find that you are not reaching your target audience, then you should either reevaluate how you use social media or whether it is effective to use or not. Depending on the social media platform, there are different strategies for determining reach and exposure. Since Facebook and Twitter are the most commonly used in public relations campaigns, we will focus on those specifically; however, there are many resources online to help you determine similar statistics for other platforms, such as simplymeasured.com/freebies/instagram-analytics.

In regards to Facebook, you can look at your page’s and posts’ statistics on reach and exposure through clicking the “View Insights” option on your page’s settings (see page 76 in Appendix for an example) (Soper et al., 2015). This feature will tell you likes, reach, visits, posts, shares, and more for your entire page or individual posts, as well as give you diagrams to demonstrate the campaign’s effectiveness over time on Facebook (Soper et al., 2015). For Twitter, you can use a free metrics system, such as Hootsuite, to help you measure reach and exposure.

**Engagement.** Through measuring how many users engaged and interacted with your messages, you can evaluate the appeal and interest of your public relations efforts (AMEC, n.d.). Thus, the more engagement that you see, the more effective and valuable your campaign (Vanderschmitt, 2012). For Facebook, you can determine engagement in a couple of different ways, such as the number of likes, comments, or clicks on links.
Again, all of these can be found through the “insights” feature (Soper et al., 2015). On Twitter, you can look at the number of retweets, favorites, replies, and clicks on links, which can be detected by registering with Hootsuite at the beginning of your campaign.

**Sentiment analysis.** Leaving your analysis at simply finding the number of mentions or likes would be a mistake. You need to qualitatively analyze how your campaign and organization are being talked about (AMEC, n.d.). You could have thousands of likes and mentions, but if they are negative or caused by negative influences, then you could actually be hurting your campaign’s and organization’s efforts by giving them a bad reputation.

Measuring sentiment is relatively similar across all social media platforms. You first need to collect data on the number of times your campaign or organization is mentioned over a specific time period (Vanderschmitt, 2012). This can be done by searching hashtags used in your campaign or by keyword searching your organization’s name in the search bar. Once compiling, you need to assign each mention a category of positive, negative, or neutral. This is similar to evaluating news media—you want to determine the category placement based on the author’s voice and content presented.

Finally, you need to calculate the percent of mentions that fell into each category. If they were mostly positive and neutral, then you are effectively influencing your audience. If they are mostly negative, then you need to reevaluate your social media messages and strategize on how to effectively change your target audience’s views toward your campaign and organization.

**Influence.** When you have a high level of influence, you are more likely to inspire your target audience to take some kind of action, such as engaging with your
message and sharing it with others (AMEC, n.d.). Word-of-mouth communications about your campaign and organization as well as others sharing your content on their walls or feeds will generate more awareness with a low cost of money and time for you (Vanderschmitt, 2012). You can measure your content’s influence by determining how often your messages are retweeted or shared, the influence of your followers that are sharing your content by looking at who follows them and the number of backlinks going to your pages, which can be configured through ahrefs.com.

In addition, if and when you are at the point where many of your followers are sharing and actively engaging in your campaign, then you should take it a step further and create activism through social media, such as encouraging your audience to write to legislators and create discussions through posts and tweets.
SECTION 7

NEXT STEPS

After going through each phase of your campaign, you should now have an understanding of how successful your campaign was and how it created a lasting impact. There are many ways you could have done so, such as increasing the number of volunteers at select organizations, creating additional opportunities for homeless people working with legislators to address societal problems, or simply making more people aware of the homelessness situation in their community.

Even if your campaign did not seem to make any type of long-term activism, you should not worry, because it is not too late. In fact, you can use your campaign research and evaluation as evidence to present to legislators to create some sort of change or create a new campaign to address activism as its goal. The following section can either be used in conjunction with your campaign or as activism after your campaign to create a positive impact on society and directly address your organization’s goal.

Leaving a Legacy

As a person working on a campaign with homelessness or homeownership awareness as your primary topic, it is probably safe to assume that you want to make some sort of societal change or lasting impact from your efforts; however, what may not be as obvious is how you can do so. Regardless of where you are in the campaign
process, this list of ideas can assist you in creating a long-term impact by addressing your organization’s mission and/or goal(s) (Cutlip et al., 2006, pp. 367-371):

1. Lobby for change by demonstrating to legislators why an issue should be addressed in government.

2. Increase citizen participation in and awareness of the issue at hand.

3. Connect existing organizations with similar missions to each other to extend efforts and prevent the reinvention of the wheel.

4. Share campaign successes and challenges with other nonprofits and social organizations to aid others in their campaigns.

5. If you are feeling ambitious, create change yourself by finding solutions, technological, or intellectual, to long-held problems or particular aspects.

**Lobbying**

While nonprofit organizations are prohibited from getting involved in political campaigns and activities, they are allowed to lobby for causes and legislation pertaining to their organization’s mission (Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 157). In addition, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (n.d.) places limits on the amount of time and money nonprofits can spend lobbying and requires detailed reports of lobbying activities due to the nonprofits’ tax-exempt status. Even if you are not associated with a nonprofit, you should review the rules and limits of lobbying, determine your activities that are considered lobbying, and focus on the legislation and issues that are central to the mission of your group and the target audience you serve.

If you decide that you want to lobby, the following is a simple checklist to aid you in your efforts (IRS, n.d.; Cutlip et al., 2006, p. 155-158). **Note the key difference:**
Advocacy pertains to general ideas, whereas lobbying refers to addressing specific pieces of legislation or potential ones (Cutlip et al., 2006).

1. **Check your organization’s status with the IRS.** Most nonprofits will be designated as 501c (3) organizations and will be exempt from taxes.

2. **Have the IRS measure your projected lobbying activities and file the appropriate reports.** Depending on the amount you plan to spend lobbying, you should select a designated test. If you plan to spend a significant amount, you will have to do an expenditure test. If you do not plan to lobby much, then the substantiality test should be appropriate. **Note:** Check with your organization’s accountant before moving forward.

3. **Be sure to exclude governmental grants as a way to fund lobbying.**

4. **Contact your local legislators.** You can contact your local, state, or even national legislators through letter, phone, or in person. **Remember:** Written communications, such as letters and emails, are considered lobbying.

5. **Gather supporters.** While you are engaged with your target audience either during or after your campaign, you should discuss ways they can get involved to help create change in issues like homelessness and affordable housing conditions, such as contacting or writing legislators.

6. **Do not get involved in politics.** It is against the law for nonprofits to speak in favor or against a political candidate.

7. **Incorporate lobbying into objectives and events.** You can do this by inviting legislators to address legislation on homelessness or affordable housing or writing
a letter of proclamation to draw more awareness to homelessness and affordable housing issues (see page 73 for a sample proclamation).
**Sample Proclamation.** The following proclamation proposal was made for the purposes of this guide. However, the information included is accurate information from the Operation: Owning the Dream campaign (Soper et al., 2015). **Note:** The document contains formal language, and its contents include how the proclamation can affect the community positively. Meeting with the public official beforehand to discuss your proposed proclamation will make it most effective in ensuring that the proclamation is made in a timely manner.

---

**A RESOLUTION CLAIMING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2015 AS**

**NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS AND HOMEOWNERSHIP AWARENESS MONTH**

**IN BOWLING GREEN, KENTUCKY**

**BY YOUR CITY COUNCIL/MAYOR/COMMISSION: ___________**

Date Proclamation Issued: February 1, 2015

WHEREAS, since 2013 HOME MATTERS, a national non-profit organization that supports a movement toward redefining the American Dream through attempting to reduce homelessness and increase homeownership, affordable rent and the quality of communities; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this proclamation is to educate the public about the many reasons people are homeless including the shortage of affordable rent and housing in Bowling Green, Ky., for low income residents; and to encourage support for a movement to look at homeownership as more of a societal need as oppose to a personal achievement; and

WHEREAS, there are many organizations committed to providing shelter, supportive services, and permanent housing including but not limited to Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, Hotel, Inc., the Student Coalition for Renters’ Rights, and Room in the Inn; and

WHEREAS, the theme of National Homelessness and Homeownership Awareness Month is to redefine the "American Dream" to include homeownership for all; and

WHEREAS, the intent of National Homelessness and Homeownership Awareness Month is to encourage WKU student leaders to collaborate and join already existing organizations across the community, such as Habitat for Humanity and Salvation Army; and

WHEREAS, Operation: Owning the Dream recognizes that homelessness and homeownership continues to be a serious problem for many individuals and families in Bowling Green, Ky.; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the ________ hereby proclaims February 1-28, 2015 as National Homelessness and Homeownership Awareness Month.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Operation: Owning the Dream encourages all citizens to recognize that many people do not have housing and need support from citizens, and private/public nonprofit service entities. In addition, by raising awareness of the need of equal chances of homeownership, society will experience better education, safety, quality of communities, economy and health.
APPENDIX

Figure 1: The Stack of the Deck Activity as used in the Operation: Owning the Dream campaign (Soper et al., 2015).
Nutrition
Person 1
- Your family struggles to get
  by on a minimum wage
  income and is on and off
  food stamps. However, food
  stamps don’t always last
  until the end of the month
  and you sometimes are
  forced to come to school
  without breakfast. It is
difficult to concentrate on
school when you are
hungry. Person 1 gives the
Bank their Queen and gets
5% in return.

Person 2
- You always have three
  meals a day, usually with
  nutritious snacks in
  between, and you always
  know where the next meal
  will come from.
  Person 2 gives the Bank
  their 4 and gets Jacks in
  return.

Parenting
Person 1
- Your parents separate and
  your dad disappears for a
  while and you have to
  pay for a babysitter. Your
  finances are really difficult.
  Child support is ignored by
  law, but your mom isn’t
  sure how to navigate the
  legal system for your dad to
  pay it. On average, women’s
  earnings tend to lag behind men, almost
  43% of single mothers live
  below the poverty line. Person
  1 gives the Bank their Jacks
  and gets 4% in return.

Person 2
- You have a happy family, but
  even if your parents were to
  separate, the child support
  question is as to whether you
  will always have access to
  financial resources from both
  of them.
  Person 2 gives the Bank
  their 8% and gets Queens in return.

College
Person 1
- You want to go to college
  and there is financial aid
  offered for low-income
  students. But even
  with that, college
  expenses are high. You
  don’t have a bank
  account and often have
  to find a part-time job.
  You decide to go
  full time at the job you had
  through high school, a fast
  food job, and to pay off college
  expenses you ask your
  family for help.
  Person 1 gives the Bank
  their 10% and gets 5% in return.

Person 2
- It has always been assumed
  that you will go to college, so
  will almost everyone in your high
  school. As an 18 year old, you
  have an SAT prep book, but you’ll
  need extra help. You apply for
  scholarships and write
  about how you’ve
  overcome obstacles.
  In this case, you are a
  minority. There was a
  time you thought you
  wouldn’t get accepted
  but you did. You’ve
  found your place, and
  you finally choose the one
  that feels like the best fit for you.
  Person 2 gives the Bank their
  8% and gets 8% in return.

How are they doing?
Statistics tell us Person 1, who did not go to college, is likely to make $20,000 less than Person 2.
Person 1 and Person 2 will shuffle their decks and show us the top 4 cards.

Earning Potential
- Deck 1
  - Annual:
  - Per Month:
  - Per Week:
  - Per Hour:
- Deck 2
  - Annual:
  - Per Month:
  - Per Week:
  - Per Hour:

Monthly Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Deck 1</th>
<th>Deck 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Earnings</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Payments</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAKE A PLEDGE THAT MATTERS.

I, ______________________, commit to making the New American Dream a reality for all.

Engage in the conversation. Tweet your pledge with #NewDream.

by @SPacerMaterials
**Figure 2:** Examples of the Facebook Insights Page as demonstrated through the Operation: Owning the Dream page (Soper et al., 2015).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Published</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Tagging</th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/30/2015</td>
<td>Last chance to help make some a reality for all. The short 3-minute survey will close Saturday night. Thank you for your participation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/01/2016</td>
<td>Come join WNU Habitat for Humanity tomorrow in OSU from 10:30 AM to 1 PM to help build a home for families less than 7 minutes to home.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/02/2016</td>
<td>Here's your last opportunity to help make some a reality for all. Take and share this survey to make a difference!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/03/2016</td>
<td>Here's an opportunity to help make some a reality for all. Take and share this survey to make a difference!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/04/2016</td>
<td>Got a copy of The Hepatitis check out the Student Coalition for Renters Rights.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>418</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/05/2016</td>
<td>The good news: no plans to purchase the new book are moving forward. The bad news: students need textbooks!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/06/2016</td>
<td>For all of you who want to procrastinate longer, here's a last-minute quiz that will give you an idea if your current home is large!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/07/2016</td>
<td>The link below provides a step-by-step guide on how to become a homeowner in the Commonwealth. It discusses loan options, available programs, and more.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/08/2016</td>
<td>Take the home buyers interactive quiz about how houses affect society.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3: Example of earned media from using a news release during the Operation: Owning the Dream campaign (Soper et al., 2015). Go to page 39 to see news release.

Students look to address homing issues in BG

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT
NEWS@WKUHERALD.COM

Another campus group is looking to combat homelessness and obstacles to ownership.

Operation: WKU Home Matters, also known as Operation: Owning the Dream, is an attempt to fix both issues of homelessness and problems with home owning for college students within the community.

It is part of a larger, national movement to cure these problems called Home Matters.

The campaign for this chapter of Home Matters started on Feb. 1, but planning started in September of 2014. This chapter was formed when the Public Relations Student Society of America partnered with Home Matters and challenged Ballman Case Study competitors to raise awareness, spark interest, and facilitate communal dialogue around affordable housing.

Operation: Owning the Dream will have two workshops. The first workshop occurred on Feb. 10 and dealt with the subject of homelessness.

The other will be on Feb. 17 at 7 p.m., on the third floor of DSU and will discuss homeownership.

While this initiative will only be during the month of February, Blake Soper, the group’s public relations coordinator, hopes it will have long-lasting effect, thanks to its partnership with several local groups, such as Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, Student Coalition for Home’s Rights and Health Inc.

“It brings everyone together and tries to create a collaboration,” he said.

Catherine Haeck, another member of Operation: Owning the Dream, believes this initiative is valuable.

“Our primary research reveals that 91 percent of WKU students consider owning a home apart of the American Dream,” she said. “By localizing the national Home Matters movement, we are simply helping students achieve their ideal American Dream.”

Alyson Mansley, advertising coordinator, thinks that this initiative will be helpful to the community.

“We hope to use a series of speakers on the 17th, to address these issues and help educate students on how they can become homeowners and how homeownership will help improve the quality of their communities,” she said.

After the workshops, Operation: Owning the Dream will send out a survey, through both social media and email, asking students to evaluate their performance and offer suggestions on how to improve.

Operation: Owning the Dream is also promoting its mission through an online video series, available for viewing on their Facebook—Operation: WKU Home Matters. It also has a Twitter: @OperationWKU.
Figure 4: Sample flier and form of promotion from the Operation: Owning the Dream campaign (Soper et al., 2015).
Figure 5: “One Night without a Home” event information taken from the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2013, pp. 20-21).

“ONE NIGHT WITHOUT A HOME”

The “One Night Without a Home” Awareness Sleep Out takes place nationally during Awareness Week.

The “One Night” is an opportunity for housed persons to spend a night outside to discuss, think, and learn about homelessness. Although one night outside can, in no way, simulate homelessness, it will promote advocacy, awareness, and education.

Format

- “One Night Without a Home” usually lasts for about 12 hours, often from 7 pm until morning.
- Develop your mission statement. Address the questions of who, what, where, when, and why?
- Make sure to receive permission right away from your city or county officials and community/school administrators concerning location, security, and other logistics.
- Invite homeless/formerly homeless people, community leaders, residents and community spokespeople to speak.
- Choose an appropriate site (central to community activities).

- Ask local businesses for donations (food, drinks, supplies, money).
- Ask other groups to co-sponsor the event, such as organizations (e.g. Food Not Bombs, Habitat for Humanity) that can serve food to homeless guests.
- Prepare group discussion topics that will promote interaction among all participants.
- Begin the night with a vigil or a march to draw attention, as well as participants, to the event.
- Include information that allows participants to act upon what they’ve learned (community service, letter writing, advocacy organizations).
- In the morning, allow time for participants to share their thoughts and concerns.

Sample Agenda

6:00 p.m. Gather participants and provide transportation for homeless/formerly homeless guests
7:00 p.m. Serve coffee and/or a meal
8:00 p.m. Speakers/candlelight vigil/music
9:00 p.m. Discussion groups
11:00 p.m. Late night food line/music
7:00 a.m. Breakfast/closing remarks/ wrap-up
Additional suggestions

- Be mindful of what you bring. Keep in mind the situation that you are simulating; do not bring any objects or goodies that those without a home most likely lack. Do not bring cell phones, laptop computers, iPads or portable radios. Stay away from having pizza delivered. For college groups, alcoholic beverages are not allowed.
- Consider bringing supplies to donate to the homeless. Anything you bring for additional comfort would be greatly appreciated by someone who undergoes the experience every night.
- Contact local shelters or homeless advocates about bringing homeless people to your event. Ask these contacts to participate in the Night as well.
- Ask local musicians to play. Music brings people together.
- Distribute fact sheets and information about hunger and homelessness and the other events for Awareness Week.
- Make sure to recruit other people to participate in your early planning stages. Ask homeless/formerly homeless people, students, faculty, and community members.
- Invite the media.
- Post a list of rules on the night of the event. These may include: 1) no drugs or alcohol, 2) do not interrupt those who are speaking, 3) respect all views, 4) do not leave the site. Also, post and announce the agenda, people in charge, bathroom locations, indoor sites, food and first aid stations. You may choose to put a container out for donations. Have a facilitator to mediate any disputes that may arise.
- Set aside some time for group discussion about hunger and homelessness in your community and/or in our nation. Provide paper and pencils for people to jot down their ideas. This is a good time to promote future projects, such as a day of fasting.

Wrap-Up

Appoint a committee to draft a group resolution based on the discussions that night. Establish a common ground for participants who would like to take future action. Collect names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of people for future reference and provide access to information on local service sites. For more information, contact the National Coalition for the Homeless at (202) 462-4822; E-mail: info@nationalhomeless.org.
FURTHER READING

1. **National Homeless and Awareness Week** (NationalHomeless.org)

   The following link is to the National Coalition for Homeless. The National Coalition for the Homeless is a national network of people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, activists and advocates, community-based and faith-based service providers, and others committed to a single mission: To prevent and end homelessness while ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights protected. The site even provides resources to its campaigns over the past several years, which can be useful in generating ideas.

2. **Poverty USA** (PovertyUSA.org)

   Poverty USA is an organization that seeks to educate and promote understanding about poverty and its root causes. This website can be useful in finding statistics about poverty, as well as finding interesting media and activities for your campaign.

3. **A Student’s Guide to Ending Homelessness** (mnhomelesscoalition.org)

   The following is a student guide on the topic of homelessness. It contains various topics of homelessness and how one might go about trying to end homelessness, which are mainly suggestions for events in a public relations campaign. The Minnesota Coalition for Homeless is a nonprofit organization that seeks to generate policies, community support, and local resources for housing and services to end homelessness in Minnesota.
4. **The Urban Institute for Housing** (www.urban.org/housing/index.cfm)

The Urban Institute for Housing monitors and assesses housing market trends, affordable housing, homelessness, federal housing assistance, racial disparities and housing discrimination, and community revitalization. This research is useful in informing decision makers and your target audience with neighborhood-level data and evaluations of federal housing programs.

5. **Effective Public Relations by Scott Cutlip, Allen Center and Glen Broom**

Effective Public Relations has been a leading text in public relations theory and practice. It has served as a reference since its first edition in 1952 and is considered to be acceptable for academic study. This academic text can be useful to use as a scholarly source for further learning of public relations that expands beyond social responsibility and nonprofit works.
REFERENCES


Gates, M. (2011). What non-profits can learn from Coca-Cola [online video]? *Ted Talks.* Retrieved from https://video.search.yahoo.com/video/play;_ylt=A0LEViU5RQ9VlpcAmXwlnIIQ;_ylu=X3oDMTB0dmRibmhwBHNlYwNzYwRjb2xvA2JmMQR2dGlkA1lIUzAwMV8x?p=Coke+Ted+talks&tnr=21&vid=2816F0DB5D2314EE0A972816F0DB5D2314EE0A97&l=988&turl=http%3A%2F%2Fs.search.yahoo.com%3Fp%3DCoke%2BTed%2Btalks%26ei%3DUTF-8%26hsimp%3Dyhs-004%26hspt%3Dmozilla%26sigb=12qc7ft8l&hspart=mozilla&hsimp=yhs-004.


