



H A M I L T O N C O U N T Y

Leadership Academy

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**Class of 2010
Marketing Plan Project**

**prepared for:
Meals on Wheels of Hamilton County**

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Mission

The mission of Meals on Wheels of Hamilton County is to deliver nutritional meals to elderly, disabled and homebound residents who are unable to prepare food for themselves due to a physical or mental challenge. Meals are prepared in state-approved healthcare facilities and designed by a certified registered dietitian under a physician's prescribed supervision according to the client's specific dietary needs.

Vision

The primary goal of Meals on Wheels is to help our clients remain independently living within the community in their own homes for as long as possible. Meals are delivered weekdays, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, between 11:00 a.m. and 1:30p.m. Friendly volunteers compassionately deliver more than 45,000 meals each year to clients in all eight communities of Hamilton County. Drivers donate their time, vehicle and gas to extend a helping hand and check on the well-being of clients who receive meals.

Target Population

Meals on Wheels of Hamilton County provides nutritious meals delivered to elderly, disabled and homebound residents either on a short-term or a long-term basis. Clients may be recovering from a hospital stay, an injury or a disabling illness. Meals are provided five days a week as long as necessary.

Objectives

Funding the coming growth will be an essential part of the organization. Hamilton County's population in 1990 was 108,936. In 2008 the population had jumped to 266,019, and estimates predict that 50,000 more will be residing in the county in five years. Connecting with new donors and staying connected with current donors is necessary for serving the increasing population. Creative ways to attract and retain donors needs to be formed. They need to feel like they are making a difference and helping the community.

A fresh presence should be created. A new and consistent branding is needed for the community. Along with growth bringing many more people, it will bring the opportunity to create an impression in their minds about the organization, and that the organization exists. The perception of MoW needs to be expanded beyond the view of it being only for the elderly. Media and social media are areas to explore creating a new and vibrant presence in.

The service aspect of MoW is very recognizable and will continue to grow. Attracting and retaining volunteers will always be a need. There should be the expectation for an increase in volunteers, routes, recipients, and meal preparation . Preparation to handle this increase is necessary. There is also an opportunity to expand the service to pets for the recipients.

Strategies

1. Develop Branding Concepts:

- Consistent logo and color
- Make sure branding is featured on all marketing materials
- Use branding material in all forms of communication
- Develop a consistent marketing message to meet the needs in following areas:
 - donor recruitment
 - volunteer recruitment
 - customer awareness

2. Develop Consistent Advertising Methods:

- Enhance website with volunteer features, testimonials, sponsor recognition, donor resources, etc.
- Re-evaluate all promotional material
- Develop email marketing strategy
- Develop donor and volunteer solicitation package
- Direct mail campaigns for fund-raising
 - Ex. Feed someone in need for just \$900/year.
- Utilize Facebook and twitter to tell story and involve donors and recipients of services
 - Great place to tell the MOW story often!
- Consider other advertising outlets: radio, billboards, tv, event participation and signage

3. Develop Public Relations:

- Host awareness activities
- Participate in community events
- Develop relationships with media outlets and provide press releases
- Create a "canned" presentation to be used by staff and volunteers
- Develop fund raising events for Doctors and other potential large donor groups

4. Explore potential cross-promotional opportunities and partnerships with likeminded organizations:

- Develop relationships with:
 - corporations
 - other non-profit organizations
 - churches
 - communities
 - medical clinics and physicians

5. Develop a Recruitment Program for Key Shareholders:

- Donors
- Volunteers
- Customers

6. Develop a Set of Volunteer "Expertise" Committees:

- Recruit and set up volunteer committees in order to develop plans and advise the MOW board and leadership in the following areas:

Fundraising

Marketing/Advertising

Public Relations/Media

Social Networking

7. Develop a Communication Plan:

- Create and develop constant contact points with all shareholders
- Incorporate more testimonial and true life stories in social media, newsletters, website, and promotional literature

Product Pricing

The price of a home-delivered meal is determined not only by the cost of food, labor and packaging, but also by the value that it brings to the client who is receiving the meal.

- The first value is that the meal is prescribed by the client's physician to meet their individual nutritional needs.
- The second value is that the quality of food is better than the client could prepare for themselves.
- The third value is the service quality of having the meal personally delivered by a friendly, compassionate volunteer driver who will provide socialization and a welfare check, to give the family of the client some peace of mind.
- The fourth value is that the meal is reasonably priced according to market trends, considering all that the client receives.

The first basic step for establishing the price for a meal should take into consideration the combined cost of food, packaging and labor that is paid to a contract caterer to prepare the meal and a break-even margin of profit. Historically, only 50% of clients pay the invoiced amount for meals delivered. The other 50% are unable to pay or are only able to pay a portion of the invoiced amount. As a social service agency, the primary goal of MOW is to meet the need in the community. While consideration should be given to the cost of the meal when establishing a price, the service will be provided without regard for ability to pay. Due to the subsidization of the meals additional funding is generated from grants, donations and fund raising to cover the cost of meals and operational expenses.

An annual price comparison of both other MOW organizations and alternative meal delivery providers should be completed by the MOW staff. The comparison should be completed at least once each year and reviewed with the board prior to any change in pricing to clients.

Promotional Concepts

Advertising

- Billboards focused on donors (strategically placed on 31 & 37 or other high traffic areas)
- Direct Mail- list rental and focus on doctors and other potential donor groups
- Brochure Displays- Strategically placed at doctor offices, hospitals, churches, banks, grocery stores, businesses, and public areas.
- Online- Create Facebook page and co-promotion on other non-profit organization's websites.
- Press releases
- Post events on city and community calendars and event web pages
- Place print ads with various Homeowner Association newsletters and websites

Corporate Promotions

- Create corporate donation competition
Work w/ different companies that are willing to compete against other companies for a month to raise funds from their employee base and match those funds from a corporate level. This is a great opportunity to create events with different companies and for those companies to get great press.
- Find companies to sponsor a certain # of meals each month (ie Feed 100 people for a month) In return, company can use as a promotion, press releases, or be included in donor recognition programs.
- Work w/ local grocery stores (Kroger, Marsh, Wal-Mart, Meyers, etc.)
Create a campaign allowing shoppers to donate at register and for store to match or give % of revenues on certain days.
- Create Restaurant Events- Certain evenings customers can make extra donation next to tip line on receipt and restaurants can promote using table cards.
- Create a company volunteer plan where a company commits so many man hours a month to delivering meals.
- Recruit corporate sponsors (ie 4 companies to sponsor 3 months each) Create a plan to show value to companies for sponsoring.

Church Outreach

- Create a youth ministry focused on helping those in need through MOW
- Create youth, congregation, and church donation plans
- Get involved with mom's groups or other women's groups to create partnerships
- Find current volunteers/donors from various churches to lead the ministries
- Develop recruitment teams within churches. Place MoW ambassadors within each church. Somebody to help carry the message.
- Create video focused on those in need to be used for recruitment during church services
- Recruit pastors to get involved with the organization
- Seek lists of those in need from churches
- Become part of the church bulletin or newsletters

Celebrity Spokesperson

- Recruit a professional athlete or other public figure that calls Hamilton Co. home to become a spokesperson for MoW.
- Create events around spokesperson to bring in donors
- Use spokesperson in recruitment video

Public Events

- Attend all community events with a donor booth
- Partner w/ police and fire departments to create public relations programs (ie, firemen deliver meals for a day, etc.)
- Setup a booth at the state, county, and community fairs and festivals

Donor Recognition Program

- Create defined donor levels (ex. Silver, gold, platinum, etc.)
- Establish donor recognition events and press opportunities
- Send donors thank you letters
- Develop a donor newsletter so they can see the fruits of their giving
- Include stories of the meal recipients
- Develop a donor e-newsletter
- Involve the medical community (Target doctors and other high level medical personnel in the county)
- Tell stories on face book page

Create MoW Ambassadors Club

- MoW Ambassadors are volunteers who lead the MoW cause in their church, place of work, and community events.
- Conduct training and regular meetings with these people so they can properly promote and recruit
- Develop a communication plan to keep these people informed, engaged and involved.
- Reward these people through recognition

Partner with Youth Groups

- Boy Scouts
- Girl Scouts
- American Heritage Girls
- Create volunteer programs and activities

Partner with other Non-Profit Organizations

- Develop shared promotions with other likeminded organizations
- Advertise, share booth space, share promotional events with these organizations
- Share video development

Promotions Tracking

A key function of market research is to track the effectiveness of the marketing/promotional activity. It is our recommendation that Meals on Wheels implement a way to track the success or failure of its marketing activity. This is probably best dealt with in partnership with a specialist. Promotions tracking will allow Meals on Wheels to build upon those marketing activities that are a success, and to discontinue those activities that are not achieving the results necessary to justify the expense.

The most important form of promotions tracking that we recommend for Meals on Wheels, is to develop a database that tracks whether new donors or volunteers come about as a result of new marketing efforts. For example, if Meals on Wheels uses a direct mail marketing campaign to reach donors, MOW should use its database to track who gave a donation, when they gave that donation, when and if the donor received the new marketing materials, and whether there is a correlation in timing between the donor receiving the marketing materials and making the donation. This type of database will allow Meals on Wheels to track repeat donors, and learn how to build upon that donor's willingness to make multiple donations. Similarly, such a database may help Meals on Wheels learn whether its attempts to gain new volunteers through direct marketing, advertising, public relations, etc. are successful or not. This database could be developed by the Marketing Director for Meals on Wheels and maintained by a volunteer. Alternatively, Meals on Wheels could hire an outside marketing specialist to assist with the promotions tracking.

Other forms of promotions tracking that could be used include mail surveys and telephone surveys to those donors and volunteers who respond to a new marketing campaign. Such surveys are often conducted by third party specialists. The surveys gather information from donors and new volunteers, such as how they heard about Meals on Wheels, why they gave, and what suggestions they have for future campaigns.

Similar forms of promotions tracking should be utilized on Meals on Wheels' website, including tracking where donors heard about Meals on Wheels, how often they visit the site, whether they are repeat donors, what area of the County they reside and work in, etc.

Without some form of promotions tracking, Meals on Wheels will never know if its new marketing efforts are making a difference or not. Therefore, it is crucial that MOW implement such promotions tracking at the same time that it implements its new marketing plan.

Product Distribution

The current volunteer distribution of meals on wheels is a great. The personal touch and human interactions is possibly more important than the meal itself. However, continue to evaluate routes and volunteers needed. Develop a volunteer recruitment plan and consider community focused volunteer efforts. Also, continue to develop relationships with multiple meal providers.

Customer Market Research

Continually evaluate county demographics and develop plans to meet the increasing needs. Focus not only on those in need, but the donor and volunteer groups, as well. Understand why your volunteers volunteer and why your donors donate. Once these reasons are specifically and accurately identified, a targeted marketing approach to attract prospects should be implemented.

Budget

Budgetary information is proprietary to Meals on Wheels. As a result, we did not have access to this information. Obviously, a carefully planned and implemented budget is crucial to meeting needs. Our group highly recommends that a significant amount is added to the budget for the sole purpose of marketing to recipients' in need, volunteers, and especially donors.