

Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive Public Relations Campaign 1

Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive Public Relations Campaign:
To Gain Media Coverage for Holiday Toy Donations and the Third Annual Toys for Tots
Benefit Golf Tournament

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Abstract

This research and documentation is an analysis and instructive guide for conducting a public relations campaign to promote the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive. This campaign places emphasis on the importance of publicity to successfully gain toy donations and awareness for the Toys for Tots cause. With the recent downturn of the economy, the media will be instrumental in furthering the Toys for Tots mission and purpose to collect an estimated 3,000 toy donations for Nipomo children (newborns to 16 years of age). Although the 2008 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive was successful without the presence of media coverage, the recent economic downturn may limit the number of donations for the 2009 charity drive. The public relations campaign for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive involves production of promotional materials for the region's coordinator to implement through local media. The campaign's produced materials are also supported by scholarly evidence to vouch for the academic science behind the campaign. At the time of senior project completion, the 2009 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive remains ongoing.

Introduction

On October 11, 2009 the Santa Maria Times published an article titled “It’s beginning to feel a lot like Christmas” which stated, “The (Toys for Tots) program draws a lot of attention from needy families in the region. Program officials are expecting many more families to sign up this year, in part because the economy is writing new rules for family budgeting.” The October 11 Santa Maria Times article also reported that the 2008 Central Coast Toys for Tots program distributed more than 100,000 toys to children living in areas between Paso Robles and Lompoc, California.

The Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive is a local town drive within the California Central Coast Toys for Toys region. During the 2008 Nipomo Toys for Tots charity drive more than 3,000 toys were collected and distributed. With only an estimated 800 children receiving three gifts each, there were about 600 remaining toys which were donated towards the Arroyo Grande Toys for Tots Drive, fellow Toys for Tots drive within the California Central Coast region (Mansfield, 12 October 2009). However, the U.K. *Guardian*’s September 23, 2009, article reported that “The amount people give to charity has fallen by 11 percent in a year because of the recession.” Thus due to the state of the current economy it is expected that donations for the 2009 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive and the entire Toys for Tots program will be down in comparison to previous years.

Deborah Mansfield, the Nipomo Toys for Tots Coordinator and Central Coast Deputy Director, began conducting the charity drive in 2008 and the 2009 charity drive will be her second year organizing the event. Although Mrs. Mansfield did not utilize the media in her first year coordinating the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive, the past event was extremely successful with

an excess of about 600 toys which in turn went toward drives within the California Central Coast region where donations were lacking. With the recent news reports of declining charity donations, the public relations campaign for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive will involve producing promotional materials for Mrs. Mansfield to use to utilize the media. All produced campaign materials will also be supported by scholarly evidence and data research to ensure the academic science behind the campaign.

Specifically, the campaign will involve composing a communications plan for implementing promotional materials to the local public and media, a news release template for the kick off of the holiday toy drive, a news release for next year's Third Annual Nipomo Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament and other promotional materials included within the campaign's appendix for future Nipomo Toys for Tots events. The Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive involves task management goals which aim at motivating individuals to donate toys, money, time or energy.

In Norman Nager and T. Harrell Allen's 1984 *Public Relations Management by Objectives*, goals concerned with getting certain things done are identified as Task Management Goals. The goals for this campaign are considered Task Management Goals because they involve increasing public support for Toys for Tots both locally and nationally, advancing social change for the Toys for Tots cause to provide underprivileged children with toys during the holiday season and impacting public behavior by encouraging Nipomo and surrounding community residents to donate toys towards the charity drive. Thus, the campaign's strategy will involve attempting to fulfill the mentioned goals through the action strategy of audience participation and the communications strategy of publicity.

Problem

The goal of the campaign is to produce materials for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive in order to gain publicity. Through publicity, increased awareness will be achieved and will motivate the general public to donate toys. Gaining publicity for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive will be a challenge since every local city/town participates in the Toys for Tots program by hosting individual toy drives. The problem of the public relations campaign is the recent economic downturn since the economy is expected to reduce the number of 2009 Toys for Tots donations nationwide. Furthermore, it is also expected that there will be an increase in registered families and children for this year's Toys for Tots program due to the economic downturn; making the success of this year's donation drive more crucial than ever. An additional problem of the campaign will be to gain individual media coverage for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive.

The main theory which will be applied to the Nipomo Toys for Tots campaign is Klapper's Reinforcement Theory that maintains media cannot create opinions from scratch, but can be effective in reinforcing existing beliefs and attitudes and encouraging individuals to act on attitudes (Bobbitt & Sullivan, 2008, p. 23). Using the Klapper's Reinforcement Theory the campaign will utilize the media to effectively "encourage individuals to act on attitudes" of the growing need for underprivileged children to receive toys during the holiday season.

Two additional theories will also be applied to the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive as supplemental theories since they will be used as evidence to suggest effective methods of gaining media coverage. The Source Credibility Theory suggests that the major factor in whether or not a message is believed is the credibility of its source. The Interaction Theory suggests that the influence a medium has over its audience is proportional to the amount of effort involved in

consuming it (Bobbitt & Sullivan, 2008, p. 23-4). The Source Credibility Theory will be used to explain the need and possible effective use of having celebrity involvement with the annual Nipomo Toys for Tots Golf Tournament. The Interaction Theory will be used to emphasize the importance in targeting different media.

Literature Review

The main objective of the Nipomo Toys for Tots campaign is to generate local awareness of the charity drive in order to gain toy and cash donations from the community. The key goal of Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive is based off of the United States Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program's mission "To collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community in which the campaign is conducted" (Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, 2006).

Toys for Tots campaigns throughout the nation rely heavily on the roles of local business leaders since they are the individuals who allow coordinators to establish drop off and collection sites for toy donations (Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, 2006). The influence of local business leaders is also important in order to increase sponsorship and media coverage of an event and cause.

Humans want to feel a sense of connection and a sense of purpose in life. Life is given meaning through developing community connections which in turn motivate individuals to give their time, money or energy to a cause or organization (Stannard-Stockton, 2008). A key question which must be answered to the public in a campaign is "What's in it for me?" (Smith, 2005, p. 85). The "What's in it for me?" incentive can be answered by highlighting the message or values of the organization which are also shared by the public. Instead of addressing that

contributions towards the campaign will fulfill the financial need of the charity drive, it is better to highlight that donations will help aid or benefit a local or global cause. For the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive the “What’s in it for me?” incentive can be addressed by attributing donations as the means of delivering the message of hope to less fortunate children who will in turn become responsible, productive, patriotic citizens (Toys for Tots Foundation, 2006).

Publicity is the aspect of communication strategy that involves attention given by the news media to an organization (Smith, 2005, p. 347). Publicity is important especially to a nonprofit organization’s campaign because advertising funds are usually lacking in comparison with for profit companies. Thus, the underlying value of publicity is to provide a third-party endorsement for the organization or cause which infers credibility of a subject or event which the general public then recognizes (Smith, 2005, p. 94).

The Nonprofit 2009 campaign of the year was awarded to Edelman and the American Heart Association’s Go Red for Women Initiative (Nonprofit Campaign of the Year 2009, March 2009). This campaign was given the honor as the most effective campaign of the year for the campaign’s public relations practitioners’ success in generating awareness that heart disease is the number-one killer of women and targeting diverse audiences. The reason why it is important to target diverse audiences is because it is not just the wealthy who donate the funds, time or energy towards organizations and causes. In fact, there is a misconception that it is the rich who are the most generous. “While the rich do give more in overall dollars, according to the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey, people at the lower end of the income scale give almost 30 percent more of their income” (Kendall & Stossel, 2006). Thus, it is beneficial in a fundraising campaign to target the upper, middle and lower classes since those who earn a lower income tend to donate a greater percentage of their paychecks to organizations and causes. The

single biggest predictor of whether someone will be charitable is their religious participation (Kendall & Stossel, 2006). This is because those who are involved in religious institutions are more likely to give towards multiple types of causes and charities.

In order to target diverse audiences, both communications forms of public relations and advertising serve a similar role in building awareness. However, it is public relations tactics that build a relationship with the consumer (possible donors) and provide knowledge about the product (or cause) under consideration (Michaelson & Stacks, p. 19). Advertising and public relations are well matched in working with each other in the overall communications cycle of building awareness, conveying knowledge and developing relevance which will in turn lead to the intent of the campaign. In the case of the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive the intent of the campaign is to receive toy, money and volunteer donations.

The source credibility theory was developed by Carl Hovland and suggests that the major factor in whether or not a message is believed is the credibility of its source, whether a person or an organization (Bobbit & Sullivan, 2008, p. 26). A source's trustworthiness and expertise are also important factors to the success of the source credibility theory. Through the use of source credibility the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive and Third Annual Benefit Golf Tournament could benefit greatly by influencing audiences to act by purchasing and donating toys for Nipomo children.

Research Questions

This research and analysis was conducted to answer the key questions about what public relations methods motivate local community members to donate toys towards the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive.

Research Question 1: What is the state of the current economy and the percentage of underprivileged children in Nipomo who will be utilizing the Nipomo Toys for Tots resources?

Research Question 2: What are other local, competing nonprofit events and holiday toy drives?

Research Question 3: What are the most effective methods to successfully gain media (gatekeeper) attention and acquire media coverage?

Research Question 4: What are the most effective public relations methods to promote the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive?

Research Question 5: What lessons from the current campaign can be applied to future campaigns?

Methodology

A web-based search was conducted between September 23 and October 12, 2009 using popular search engines and scholarly article databases. Both the search engines and scholarly article databases were used to gather information on public relations methods to motivate local community members to donate toys towards the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive. In addition to web-based searches, public relations textbooks and style guides were also utilized to gather research. The factors of how to gain media attention, promotion of nonprofit organizations, the state of the current economy, fundraising/philanthropy tactics, competing charity events and the current amount of underprivileged Nipomo children were all researched through the web-based search. More than 24 sources of public relations textbooks, print news articles, online Toys for

Tots articles, journals and information on the event's related factors and other Toys for Tots drives throughout the nation were found. After review of the 25 sources, 21 were used within the analysis instructive guide while four sources related to the subject content were dismissed.

After the web-based search was completed a series of interviews with Deborah Mansfield, Nipomo Toys for Tots Coordinator, were conducted. The interviews with Mrs. Mansfield established the needs of the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive public relations campaign. The interviews with Mrs. Mansfield revealed that due to the recent downturn of the economy it is expected that this year's Toys for Tots toy donations may be lacking in comparison to the 2008 toy drive (Mansfield interview, Oct. 12, 2009). Due to the possible lack of donations for the 2009 drive, Mrs. Mansfield emphasized her need gain media coverage since the media were not utilized/contacted in previous years.

Results

Of the 21 sources identified as research components, the majority were web-based sources. The additional sources utilized were print news articles, materials from the 2008 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive's fundraising campaign (Second Annual Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament brochure/program), public relations textbooks/guides, sample news releases, public services announcements and newspaper letters to the editor.

Research Question 1: What is the state of the current economy and the percentage of underprivileged children in Nipomo who will be utilizing the Nipomo Toys for Tots resources?

The Associated Press reported on November 6, 2009, that the national unemployment rate has surpassed 10 percent for the first time since 1983 and is likely to continue growing. The

Associated Press' article titled "Unemployment surpasses 10 percent for the first time since 1983," details that nearly 16 million people are out of a job even though the recent recession is believed to have ended. The United States Labor Department stated that in the month of November more than 190,000 jobs were lost and more than 219,000 jobs were lost in the month of September. The number of recent job losses has exceeded economists' predictions and October 2009 was the twenty-second straight month that the United States economy has shed jobs; the longest span of time in 70 years (Unemployment surpasses 10% for first time since 1983, 6 Nov. 2009).

According to a newly released survey by the Survey and Policy Research Institute at San Jose University, consumer confidence within the Silicon Valley remains low. Index numbers below 100 indicate negative public perceptions outweigh the positive and the index number for Silicon Valley residents was found to be at 76.2 (San Francisco Business Times, 10 Nov. 2009). In comparison to one year ago, "Fifty-two percent of Silicon Valley residents said they were worse off today" and 58 percent of residents consider the current economy to be in a serious recession (Silicon Valley consumer confidence remains low, 10 Nov. 2009).

The United Kingdom's Guardian reported on September 23, 2009, that the amount of people who give towards charity has fallen in the past year due to the recession according to a recent study. A study conducted by the Charities Aid Foundation and the National Council for Voluntary Organizations found that the amount of people who donate towards charities has decreased by 11 percent from fall 2008 to fall 2009.

According to City-Data.com, 2007 results confirm that 6.3 percent of Nipomo, California residents have an income below the poverty level. In comparison, 12.4 percent of California

residents in 2007 had incomes below the poverty level. The total percentage of children in Nipomo living below the poverty level is 7.3., whereas the state percentage of children in poverty is 16.9.

Male Nipomo children between the ages of six and 11 have the highest percentage (15%) of poverty stricken males in all of Nipomo. Female Nipomo children between the ages of 16 and 17 have the highest percentage (17%) of female poverty within the town. The two largest ethnicities of poor Nipomo residents includes: approximately 470 Hispanic/Latino Nipomo residents and approximately 295 Caucasian Nipomo residents. Fifty-five percent of Nipomo families are Female headed-households with no husband present.

According to Mary Squellati, Nipomo Family Resource Center Site Coordinator, Community Action Commission, the 2008 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive served 235 local families and more than Nipomo 552 children received toys. “In Nipomo there are more and more families losing their jobs and homes at this time and jobs are becoming more scarce in Nipomo,” (Squellati, 11 Nov. 2009).

Research Question 2: What are other local, competing nonprofit events and holiday toy drives?

The competing charitable fundraisers for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive are the other Toys for Tots drives conducted within the California Central Coast Toys for Tots Program. The other California Central Coast Toys for Tots drives include Atascadero, Cambria, Cayucos, Five Cities (based in Arroyo Grande), Lompoc, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Maria, Santa Ynez and Santa Barbara (www.toys4totscentralca.org). Additional competing nonprofit, fundraising events are the annual Turkey Drives of the San Luis Obispo and Santa

Barbara Food Banks. Sponsors of the annual turkey drives include KCOY Studios, Sierra Vista Hospital, Twin Cities Hospital, St. Patrick's School (in Arroyo Grande) and Whole Foods on State Street in Santa Barbara (KCOY, KCOY Turkey Drive, 13 Nov. 2009).

Research Question 3: What are the most effective methods to successfully gain media (gatekeeper) attention and acquire media coverage?

In order to gain media coverage news releases should be clear and concise and provide accurate contact information for the media to utilize if they need additional information. It is important to target the correct and appropriate news media outlets. Although it is imperative that a news release contain newsworthy information it is also essential to issue news releases in a timely manner; allowing the news release's information to not be considered out-of-date (Diggs-Brown, p. 134). News release language should be at the level of news directors, editors and journalists, not the general public. When writing a news release the inverted pyramid style is recommended. The inverted pyramid style includes the most important information at the beginning of the news release and the less important information at the end. Quotes are often included within news releases to provide personal perspective and an additional individual for the media to contact (Diggs-Brown, p. 135-136). Lastly, ending a press release with a boilerplate is helpful since it provides the media with what Diggs-Brown refers to as "the necessary background information... considered to be one of the more important and indispensable elements" (137).

The Survey of Media in the Wired World (Middleberg & Ross, 2001) found that 98 percent of journalists check their emails daily. Middleberg and Ross' work also found that emails and telephone calls are equally the preferred methods of interviewing news sources. For broadcast

media (radio and television) news releases should be directed towards news directors or assignment directors since they often dictate what stories are covered and which are not (Smith, p. 192).

Opinion editorials should always be sent out to one publication at a time. If an opinion editorial is issued to two or more competing news publications the editorial may lose credibility with the media and risk not being printed (Diggs-Brown, p. 146).

Effective public service announcements (PSAs) should include a strong theme and message, logical reasoning, and offer emotional appeal to audiences. PSA format is simple with short, concise sentences, no longer than 12 to 15 words. It is recommended to use active, not passive voice, a conversational tone and a strong opening and closing. The PSA should motivate individuals to act by telling audiences what to do, where to go or who to call (Diggs-Brown, p. 150-151). Testimonials can also be effective when a “credible spokesperson” talks about how the organization worked for them or can benefit others. In order to place PSAs on the radio, it is recommended to contact a station’s public service director and receive the station’s preferred format and length. Ten second PSAs are about 25 words, 15 second PSAs are 38 words, 30 second PSAs are 75 words and one minute PSAs are around 150 words (Diggs-Brown, p. 152). Radio PSA scripts are usually written in all uppercase letters and are triple-spaced. It is also recommended to include the radio PSA script on letterhead with the organization’s name, contact information and time length of the PSA. Many times a radio station will voice the PSA for the nonprofit organization (Diggs-Brown, p. 153).

Research Question 4: What are the most effective public relations methods to promote the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive?

News Release

News Releases are the most highly recognized of all public communication forms to the media since they are used to convey a specific message to the media who then relay the new release's message to the public. In fact, the most common tool for an organization to gain news coverage and exposure is the news release and when written clearly with newsworthy information a news release can save the media time, money and effort. However news releases should never be the only tool of a communications plan; they are effective when used in conjunction with other communications tools. In addition to the news release, many organizations utilize boilerplates (few sentences at the end of a news release that provide background information about a company/organization) in communications campaigns. Boilerplates are important since they provide the media with indispensable facts about the organization issuing the news release which will result in saving the media time (Diggs-Brown, p. 129, 131-132, 137).

An estimated half to two-thirds of the information in daily newspapers is compiled from news releases, news conferences or media alerts. Radio and television news outlets have a slightly lower rate of airing news release information due to covering more breaking news stories of accidents and crimes (Smith, p. 190). News releases are low in cost, easily accessible and provide public relations practitioners with the ability to target specific audiences. In addition, opinion editorials, also known as letters to the editor, are also low in cost and easily target key audiences (Smith, p. 199).

Advertising

Advertising is a communications avenue which provides organizations with opportunities to publicize their messages and has the ability to reach many audiences. Although advertising is an effective communications form, it lacks third-party endorsement and can be very costly (Smith, p. 201-202). While both advertising and public relations are similar, public relations practices have a greater impact on building relationships with the public and providing knowledge about an organization's products or services. However, advertising and public relations tools (news releases, public service announcement, opinion editorials) are "well matched in working with each other in the overall communications cycle of building awareness, conveying knowledge and developing relevance that eventually can lead to purchase interest or intent" (Stacks & Michaelson, p. 19).

Opinion Editorials

Opinion editorials (often referred to as op-eds or letters to the editor) are one of the most powerful communications tools for organizations to use in order to influence the opinion of a target audience. The goal of an op-ed is to shape public opinion, influence change within an audience/community or motivate behavior. Op-eds have the potential to influence opinion leaders within a community and gain support for a specific cause or stance on an issue. Most importantly op-eds give organizations the ability to have total control over a message to the public (Diggs-Brown, p. 142-143).

Public Service Announcements

Public Service Announcements, commonly known as PSAs, are often considered by nonprofit organizations' communications campaigns since they are free of charge to nonprofits. PSAs can be very powerful since they have the ability to increase awareness about a nonprofit

organization, its cause or cause-worthy event (Diggs-Brown, p. 148). PSA messages include information beneficial to the public regarding health and fitness, mental health, safety, environmental issues, quality-of-life issues for the poor, community events and nonprofit fundraising efforts. PSAs' three main purposes are to inform, persuade and advocate since the goal of a PSA is for audience members to take action. In addition to television, radio and print PSAs, these informative announcements can also be in the form of community calendars (Diggs-Brown, p. 150).

Research Question 5: What lessons from the current campaign can be applied to future campaigns?

From the current Nipomo Toys for Tots campaign there are a few lessons which can be applied to future campaigns. On October 30, 2009 the Adobe Press published an article titled "Sixth Annual Toys for Tots bike run visits South County." The Adobe Press article features the Sixth Annual Toys for Tots Bike Run, a fundraiser for the Santa Maria Valley Toys for Tots Drive. The Santa Maria Valley Toys for Tots Drive event generated awareness for the organization's cause and featured a photo of numerous motorcycles and riding participants lined up. The October 30 article states "Toy collection boxes will be set up at local businesses in early November." Thus it is suggested that all toy collection bins were distributed in early November. However, according to Mrs. Mansfield and the Nipomo Toys for Tots news release issued on November 12, 2009 this year's Nipomo Toys for Tots donation bins were distributed in mid-November.

Discussion

As reported by the U.K. Guardian, Associated Press and San Francisco Business Times the current state of the economy is unfortunate. According to the Associated Press the national unemployment rate has surpassed 10 percent, the highest rate since 1983. The Associated Press also reported that between the months of October and November more than 409,000 jobs have been lost in the United States. As a recent and up-to-date finding, it is important to recognize that an increase in families will be without their usual or complete income this holiday season. Thus, it is expected that there will be more families and children applying for toys through the Nipomo and national Toys for Tots program in comparison to past years.

As the amount of people in need of financial support is growing, the number of individuals donating time, money, or energy towards charity organizations is down. The UK Guardian reported on September 23, 2009 that the amount of people who give towards charity has fallen by 11 percent. Consequently, it is more crucial than ever that the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive's message touches as many local residents as possible. To combat the issue of declining donations due to the downturn of the economy, it is beneficial to recognize successful past nonprofit campaigns and successful methods utilized.

Due to Nipomo's status as a town, not city, the United States Census data specifically for Nipomo is not available. However, data retrieved from City-Data.com proved to be very helpful. City-Data.com confirmed that for the year of 2007 more than seven percent of Nipomo children live in poverty. Also the highest percentage of male Nipomo children living in poverty is between the ages of six and 11. Female children ages 16 to 17 have the highest percentage for Nipomo girls living in poverty. This information is significant because it proves that the greatest need for male children's toys is for boys between the ages of six and 11. For Nipomo girls, the data shows that teenage female toys are in the greatest need. Also, with 55 percent of all family

households being headed by single females it is noteworthy to acknowledge that donations for females of households may also be needed in the community.

With 235 families served and 552 children receiving toys from the 2008 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive it is expected that the number of children and families will increase for the 2009 charity drive (Squellati, 11 Nov. 2009). Since the need is expected to increase for the 2009 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive, it is crucial that the media is utilized for the 2009 and future Nipomo Toys for Tots Drives to better ensure that toys will for Nipomo's needy children will be sufficient and not lacking.

PR Week US' nonprofit campaign of the year for 2009 was awarded to the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women's Untold Stories Campaign. The campaign's success is attributed to the public relations team's efforts to gain awareness by "utilizing the media to impact diverse audiences," (Nonprofit Campaign of the Year 2009, March 2009). The success of the American Heart Association's Go Red campaign through generating awareness and targeting diverse audiences is an example of communications tactics which can deliver similar success for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive.

Since news releases are acknowledged as the "most highly recognized of all public communication forms to the media" it is important that for the 2009 and future Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive that the annual fundraising campaign strives to issue news releases (Diggs-Brown, p. 129). The news releases will be helpful to promote newsworthy events of the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive's annual donation season and benefit golf tournament. Utilizing the created news releases for the Nipomo Toys for Tots annual donation season (see Appendix C, Toys for Tots Bin Distribution News Release) and the Annual Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament news

release (see Appendix B) the campaign will provide newsworthy information to local media in order to gain coverage and ultimately gain toy/cash donations.

In addition to the news releases, a boilerplate has been created (see Appendix A, Toys for Tots News Release Template) and inserted within the news release template. The written boilerplate will aid the media by providing them with brief background information about the national U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots organization. With background information provided, local media will have more time to write and interview sources for a possible news story. Ultimately, the provided boilerplate within the news release template will give local media an incentive to cover the news release's information since they will have background information about the charity drive.

To effectively target local media and utilize as many media outlets as possible, it is recommended to contact both print and broadcast media outlets. The estimated half to two-thirds of the information in daily newspapers coming from news releases, news conferences or media alerts, is an incentive for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive to issue news releases to local print media organizations (Smith, p. 190). Although radio and television news outlets have a slightly lower rate of airing news release information (Smith, p. 190), it is important to also issue news releases to broadcast media in order to utilize as many media avenues as possible. However, print media is a more likely source of attaining media coverage.

Advertising is a successful avenue to deliver an organization's message and to reach many audiences. However, advertisements lack third-part endorsements and can be very expensive (Smith, p. 201-202). Audiences recognize advertisements as an attempt to sell something, whereas news stories are acknowledged as a third-party endorsement since media

coverage of an event/organization offers credibility to audiences. Utilizing public relations tools is also an effective avenue for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive due to the charity drive's status as a nonprofit event and organization. As a nonprofit, the charity drive's funds run at a 98 to two percent ratio (Mansfield, 12 Nov. 2009). This means that the national Toys for Tots organization mainly operates from toy/cash donations and volunteer services with only two percent of the organization's funds going towards administrative costs. Public relations not only offers a greater impact on building relationship with the public (Stacks & Michaelson, p.19), but it is also inexpensive in comparison to advertising costs.

Diggs-Brown acknowledges news releases as the most highly recognized of all public communication forms, however Diggs-Brown also emphasizes that news releases should never be the sole component of a communications plan (p. 132). Thus, opinion editorials (also known as op-eds or letters to the editor) are an additional form of communication which can successfully promote an event or organization. Opinion editorials shape public opinion and are an opportunity to highlight an issue/cause to many audiences. An opinion editorial has been issued and published in two of the major Central Coast daily newspaper publications, the Tribune (San Luis Obispo) and the Santa Maria Times (Santa Maria), see Appendix G and H.

In addition to opinion editorials, public service announcements are also an effective communications component to a public relations campaign. Due to the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive's nonprofit status, public service announcements (PSAs) can be beneficial to gain donations since they are free of charge. Radio PSAs have the possibility to be very effective for this specific charity drive since radio does not require a video production crew, as television PSAs do. By utilizing radio PSAs and not television PSAs, the costs for running the PSAs remain very affordable with only a script to be written and the PSA script to be voiced (see

Appendix E, Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament Radio PSA and Appendix F, Toys for Tots Donations Radio PSA). Furthermore, by utilizing Appendix E and F, the charity drive will only need to have the radio PSA voiced by an on-air radio personality of the radio station running the PSA. By having a radio personality voice the PSA, the PSA's speaker will offer credibility to the PSA's message and will motivate listeners to act by donating toys or cash to the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive. Online community calendars are also a form of PSAs (Diggs-Brown, p. 150). Listing event information on major news media's web-based community calendars will be especially effective for the Third Annual Nipomo Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament since the golf tournament is a one-day event and offers amenities (golf, food and auction items) to attendees.

Possible celebrity appearances and golf participants for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament are a valuable opportunity to gain what Diggs-Brown refers to as a "credible spokesperson" for other people to attend the event and donate towards the worthy cause (p. 152). The Source Credibility Theory refers to the benefits of having celebrity appearances and celebrity endorsements of events or causes. Currently, possible celebrity golf tournament participants and spokespeople include local professional athletes Horace Grant and Robin Ventura, Professional Golf Association's Fred Couples and comedian Jay Thomas. The possible celebrity spokespeople can greatly influence the success of the annual golf tournament and the toy donation drive by voicing the PSA for radio stations or publicly commenting on the worthiness of the cause.

The lessons learned from the current Nipomo Toys for Tots campaign are opportunities for improvement and can be applied to future campaigns. The lessons given are suggestions for future Nipomo Toys for Tots Drives to continue gaining toy and cash donations. To increase toy

and cash donations a suggestion for future Nipomo Toys for Tots Drives is to distribute the toy collection bins in early November opposed to mid-November. This recommendation is based on other local Toys for Tots drives distributing collection bins in early November. The Adobe Press reported on October 30, 2009 that the California Central Coast Toys for Tots drives' toy collection bins will be issued to local businesses in early November. Due to the media's reports that local collection bins will be available for the public to donate toys it is important to also abide by this local standard. In addition, it will be beneficial to issue donation bins earlier since toy donation bin distribution in early November will give the public more opportunities to donate toys and gain a larger number of total donations.

An additional suggestion for future Nipomo Toys for Tots campaigns is to organize a promotional event during the toy collection months of October, November or December. This is suggested because a promotional event (similar to the Santa Maria Valley Toys for Tots' Bike Run) will be an opportunity to generate awareness of the campaign. Conducting a promotional Nipomo Toys for Tots event with visual appeal is also strongly recommended since visual elements will give the media an incentive to cover the event.

It is also significant that the 20/20 newscast's interview of Arthur Brooks', author of "Who Really Cares," revealed that individuals who practice a religion are more likely to give towards every type of charity. For the 2010 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive it would also be beneficial for Mrs. Mansfield to contact Nipomo churches and ask if they would become supporters of the charity drive by hosting a collection bin at their location. By distributing toy donation bins to participating churches within Nipomo, the charity drive stands to gain an increased amount of toy donations since those attending church are a target public (see Appendix M, List of Possible 2010 Donation Location Sites).

Conclusion

The research and appendixes provided within the senior project are to be used as an instructive guide for preparing and executing a public relations campaign for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive. The research represents a collaboration of national and local news articles, scholarly journals and textual evidence supporting the prepared public relations tools. The research also features news articles with economic and Nipomo-specific data.

All suggestions and appendixes produced for the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive are supported by scholarly or data evidence. Through the examination of research it is suggested that utilization of media will benefit the charity drive by gaining donations. The Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive stands to gain publicity through the distribution of promotional materials to media. Media publicity will deliver the message that there is a need for community members to donate towards the cause. Furthermore, gaining media coverage will result in generating awareness of the Nipomo and surrounding areas' Toys for Tots drives and will motivate Central Coast residents to fulfill the charity drive's mission: to collect toy and cash donations for needy children of local communities.

While this instructive guide suggests that media coverage will be attained through implementation of campaign materials, those executing future Nipomo Toys for Tots Drives must to be aware of the possibility for extenuating circumstances. For example, newsworthiness is a subjective term, meaning that all individuals judge news items at different levels of importance. Thus, implementation of the proposed tools within this public relations campaign may not guarantee media coverage. Time is also a factor within the news industry which plays an important role in gaining coverage. If a news release is issued to the media within the same

period as a significant local tragedy, news outlets may not feel that a Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive event is a newsworthy item for their news publication or agency. Thus, through execution of campaign suggestions and appendixes, there is a possibility that the Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive will gain media coverage. Publicity attained through this instructive guide strives to motivate residents of Nipomo and surrounding communities to donate toys for needy children of the Central Coast.

At the time of senior project submittal, the 2009 Nipomo Toys for Tots Drive is still ongoing with three weeks until completion. Thus far, the Nipomo Toys for Tots campaign has gained media coverage of a PSA currently running on Sunny Country 102.5 FM, an article published in Adobe Press on November 20, 2009 titled “Toys for Tots campaign gets under way,” and an article published in the Santa Maria Sun on November 19, 2009 titled “Be a Christmas miracle.” In addition two opinion editorials were submitted and published in the Tribune (December 1, 2009) and Santa Maria Times (November 29, 2009) newspapers. All promotional materials created for the Third Annual Nipomo Toys for Tots Benefit Golf Tournament in 2010 are also expected to be implemented during the specified time given within Appendix L, 2010 Communications Plan.

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