

Case Study: Communicating an Old Message to a New Generation Effectively and on a Small Budget

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INTRODUCTION

About seven years ago, a retired group of Opioid Treatment Providers (OTPs), launched a public relations campaign to end the stigma against medicine assisted treatment for opioid addiction. The advocacy group, Stop Stigma Now (SSN), is an outgrowth of the Narcotics Rehabilitation Center, a state and national model of comprehensive, multidisciplinary medicine assisted treatments for opiate addiction which, prior to its closure, treated over 30,000 heroin users in an outpatient setting.

SSN raised funds to engage in advocacy and educational efforts to confront stigma and combat the inaccurate and often misguided information published in the media. Activities included: publishing articles in scientific journals, producing an educational video on Methadone Treatment, and attending professional conferences such as American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (AATOD). Their goal was to change the medical community's attitudes and opinions of medicine assisted treatment through these various public relations activities.



In May of 2014 SSN retained Consulting For Cause (CFC), a results-oriented

fundraising and development consulting firm, to create an integrated marketing and development plan, including an

Up until recently, the National Alliance for Medicine Assisted Recovery served as the fiscal agent for Stop Stigma Now.

In 2014, SSN received seed funding to launch raise essential funding to fulfill its mission, develop programmatic activities and work toward establishing itself as a separate 501 (c) (3).

The **biggest challenges** SSN faces include the need for clarity and branding of its mission, the ability to raise charitable donations and a lack of infrastructure to fulfill its mission.

SSN's greatest strength is the passion, commitment and wisdom of their voluntary leadership. They consist of the most knowledgeable professionals in the world on the subject of medical assisted treatment.

organizational assessment and re-branding of its mission - all on a limited budget.

GOAL IDENTIFICATION

CFC began its engagement with SSN by meeting with the board of directors to identify their goals, define their perception of the problem, propose solutions, and determine their ability to give the time, talent and resources needed to fulfill the mission of SSN.



At the conclusion of an initial meeting with the board of directors, CFC identified three major goals:

- Develop unique programs and activities to eradicate stigma associated with medicine assisted treatment for opioid addiction
- Assist SSN in raising funds to sustain its mission
- Develop an organizational structure, create a new brand identity, and launch a focused marketing campaign

Whether a small nonprofit like SSN or a large institution, it is important for an organization to understand its current status before it can develop effective plans toward achievement of its goals. The next step in this process included an *organizational assessment* to determine SSN’s internal capabilities, and a *market study*.

MARKET STUDY

Primary research is an important and valuable step in the development of any branding or communication initiative. In addition to *meeting with key stakeholders*, CFC held *focus groups* with students, patients and family members, community leaders and former clinicians to determine their opinions and attitudes about medicine assisted treatment; conducted

online surveys to measure strength among key stakeholders; and conducted a *competitive analysis* of four benchmark nonprofits.

Among the nonprofits analyzed was a mental health advocacy group located in the UK, called Time to Change. Using social media and the internet for its Meet the Wolf Pack Campaign, the organization effectively pushed out its key messages through its website, resulting in social conversations about mental illness on Facebook and Twitter. Within days of the campaign, the organization earned more than 155,000 friends, including 9,500 who actively talked about their mental health problems.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT



Strengths: Passionate, highly accomplished and committed volunteers

Weaknesses: Limited budget, lack of brand awareness and infrastructure

Opportunities: Opioid over-use is a national epidemic

Threats: Most people who discontinue medicine assisted treatment relapse within two years; communities do not want treatment centers in their backyard

Upon conclusion of the assessment and market study, CFC identified SSN’s target audience (18 to 35 year olds and OTPs) and determined the most effective ways to tell the SSN story in a fresh, compelling and efficient way was through a *social media campaign*. CFC’s goals were to

brand SSN online, build supporters and followers through engagement, to get people talking about SSN, and create a safe community where individuals feel comfortable sharing their own stories about addiction and recovery.

ACTION PLAN

The SSN will work to launch an integrated, focused and impactful national marketing and fundraising campaign to bring home the message:

“Stand up, Hold Hands With Us, End Stigma. It Starts With You”



People who suffer with Opioid addiction have the innate right to develop their full potential to become responsible and caring adults.

Excerpts from Case Statement:

SSN is dedicated to building recognition that overuse of opioids is a medical disease that can be overcome with medicine assisted treatment. Similar to other illnesses that require life-style changes and medicines, addiction treatment requires life-time maintenance and supportive counseling.

SSN's unique in its focus is to create communications and engage a younger audience, OTPs, and the public to build support for people afflicted with opiate addiction. Given the severity of the national epidemic of opioid addiction, it is critical for us to confront the stigma associated with opioid disorder and treatment with medications. Limiting the availability of care, discouraging people with addiction from accessing medicine treatment and allowing the stigma to prevail, impedes the progress of reducing the toll of overdose.

“To end stigma, we can make a difference by standing up, extending support and advocacy, for people with addiction to opiates in pursuit of helping them to achieve a healthier and more productive life”

Essentials:

- Case Statement* –100% support from volunteer leaders
- Communicate messages through various channels- use Face book, Twitter and Linked-In, direct mail
- Design new website and print

An integrated focused marketing approach

SSN's target audience includes people between the ages of 18 and 32 (Generation Y) who are the most impressionable, as well as OTPs and those inflicted by addiction.

According to a 2013 Canadian Giving Study, the key ingredient for a successful campaign is to use an ideal mix of strategies to communicate to different generations. Generation Y (ages 18-32) are far more likely to give on-line, they have distinct priorities and preferences with regard to causes they support, and they are far more likely to demand accountability and transparency.

Advancing Philanthropy, Winter 2014

Engagement, dialogue and conversation promote the SSN brand

SSN's goals are to build membership, broaden impact geographically and actively communicate with new stakeholders.

Technology creates new relationships with supporters by providing them with: fresh, diverse stories and cases; ways to connect with other supporters even when geographically scattered and a sense of energy and momentum for donors small and large, individual and corporate.

E-Philanthropy is a set of relationship-building tools first and fund raising tools second.

Internet as a Fundraising Vehicle, Hank Rosso's Achieving Excellence in Fundraising

There are 200 million twitter accounts; people generate more than 65 tweets a day, Facebook reports more than 500 million active users. About 70% of users are outside the US.

David Merman Scott, The New Rules of Marketing and PR

100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute, more than 1 billion unique users visit each month and watch over 6 billion hours of video—almost an hour for every person on Earth. According to Nielsen, YouTube reaches more US adults ages 18-34 than any cable network.

YouTube, 2014

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt the mission of SSN is relevant, honorable and important. The negative opinions and attitudes that exist toward people with addiction and the system of care currently available, impedes the ability for people to recover from the misuse of opioids. This is compounded by the overshadowing belief and misconception of healthcare providers in the field of substance abuse that opioid addiction is a moral weakness and believe recovery depends on willpower from all opioids, including methadone and buprenorphine. There is a vital need to continue SSN's fundraising and marketing campaign to fulfill its mission-- with the ultimate goals of eradicating stigma of medicine assisted treatment, providing affected individuals with a chance for a holistic recovery that will enable them to lead productive fulfilled lives. Considering SSN's financial limitations, implementing a focused campaign of a younger constituency, social media and internet provides the most efficient and effective methods to communicate and garner support.

Online Social Network Challenges:

- Largely user controlled
- Messaging must be a valued part of the online experience
- Spam accounts for almost 75% of email sent

EXECUTION OF STRATEGIES

Rebranding, multichannel communication and a fund development campaign will achieve SSN's goals. This includes a soft launch using a direct mail campaign with a printed post card, e-philanthropy through e-mail and a new website, and social media strategies to encourage communication and dialogue.

Rebranding:

- Design new logo and website
- Print materials: postcard, business cards, stationary—all with new fresh look



End Stigma Around Medically Assisted Addiction Treatment



APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

Case Statement- *Explanation of the needs and opportunities that confront the organization, a vehicle to recruit volunteers, secure gifts and support other fundraising goals.*

Constituency- People who have a reason to relate to or care about the organization. Such people fall into customary groupings, such as donors, corporations, foundations, users, patients and family members.

Branding- The fact, process or act of creating a brand image

Brand image- The impression of a product in the minds of current or prospective consumers that is typically created by its manufacturer to convince users that this product is superior to other brands of the same product

E-philanthropy- The act of making a contribution over the internet

Direct mail- Mass mail sent by a not-for-profit organization directly to prospects

Target- 1. Specific objective in a fundraising program or campaign. 2. A campaign goal
3. A prospective donor

501(c) (3)-Section of the Internal Revenue Service code designation that exempts certain types of organizations (such as religious, educational and health and human services) from federal taxation and permits these organizations to receive tax-deductible donations

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. In evaluating the mission of your organization and target market (s), are you using multichannel communicate strategies to reach your constituency? How do you know if they are effective?
2. Considering opioid addiction is a national epidemic, what role do you think the government should play in providing education, advocacy and resources for people who need treatment for addiction?
3. What research methods would you use to evaluate whether your brand, image and identity accurately reflect your mission?
4. What are the various fundraising methods you use to ensure you are able to garner support from different generations of donors?

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