Building Community
Associations & COVID-19: Communicate Empathically, Plan Strategically

Author: Brittany Shoul & Rachel Dillion
Date: March 26, 2020
Communication Strategy
GAP Methodology

Current State:
• Uncertainty
• Cancelled Events
• Financial Concerns
• Upended Strategy
• Remote Work

Future State:
Where do we want to be tomorrow… in 3 months…6…12?
Use the GAP to Inform the Future

Current State

Future State

Use the GAP!

Direct, honest conversations with key audiences: Members, Advertisers, Sponsors, Donors, Business Partners
Strategic Questions

- Members
- Sponsors/Advertisers
  - Donors
- Other Industry Stakeholders

WANTS

NEEDS

FEARS
Putting Information Gathering to Good Use
Strategic Product Planning

- Do you know where your “products” are in their lifecycle?
- What are the revenue drivers for your association – where is the money spent and money earned?
- What current state challenges can be addressed with products NOW?
- How do you innovate more quickly and plan for the future state?
Introduction Phase

Consider:
- Tailoring CDC content to your members
- Assn@Home bundles
- Bootcamp style training sessions
- AdHoc Online Gatherings
  - Chipotle Style
  - Conversation Circles
  - Open Zoom Lines
- “Special Event” Streaming
  - Hey, BudLight #divebartour
- Special Donor Recognition Programs
Growth Phase

*Digital Transformation acceleration!*

Consider:

- Repackaging and refreshing content: Content Bundles, Live Q&A
- Online Community engagement: retrain and reactivate
- Podcasts: Remote recording features, Up your content frequency
- Digital Advertising transformation
- Digital Sponsorship Activations
- Member Benefits/Revenue Share Partnerships
Mature Phase (and risk)

Think Critically about your “mature” products – do you have enough of these?

Association revenue is heavy in 2-3 buckets:

- **Membership**
  - Short-term open access to demonstrate value (and capture contacts!)
  - Analyzing dues cycle and impact
  - Membership Extension

- **Events**
  - Lengthening planning cycle
  - Listening for opportunity

- **Traditional Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities**
  - Shift in marketing spends is immediate and traditional channels (print, events) are impacted

![Revenue Breakdown Graph]

- **Dues** 30%
- **Events** 30%
- **Advertising** 30%
- **Other** 10%

REVENUE BREAKDOWN
Decline Phase

Regardless, it’s time to **cut the low performing products**. Redirect staff and resources to innovate products for **better member experience** and revenue opportunity.

Back to normal in 3 months?

Rolling social distancing every quarter for 2 years?
Use the GAP to Inform Future Products

Current State

Future State

Use the GAP!

Product Lifecycle Analysis
Product Introduction and Innovation
Mature Product Risk Assessment
Reallocate Resources
What Next?

- Not the time to be quiet to your audience
- Analyze your offerings and plan for the future state
- Use this time wisely!
A Note to Sales and Marketing Teams…

IF YOU HAVE A SOLUTION THAT IMPROVES THE CURRENT STATE, KEEP SELLING!
Time for Your Questions
Thank you!

Author: MCI USA: www.mci-group.com/usa
Date: March 26, 2020