

Telling Your Chamber's Story

Communications Strategies for Chambers of all Sizes and Budgets

Timothy P. Murray, President and CEO
 Sharyn Williams, VP of Marketing, Communications, Programs, and Events
 Emily Gowdey-Backus, Director of Communications

Welcome and Introduction

BACKGROUND: WhyTim

- Responding to changing, dwindling media coverage
- Increasing competition for attention from existing outlets
- Telling the story is one of the primary ways we:
 - o Communicate our value to our members
 - o Advocate on behalf of the business community
 - o Educate residents and elected officials
 - o Engage with varying demographics
 - o Increase our reach and footprint
 - o Generate member leads for our member sales department

Communications Tools

No-Cost Tools.....Sharyn

- Website
- Trade advertising and more
- Media partnerships
- Co-branded events
- Email blasts for events, announcements, etc.
 - o Action alerts
 - o E-News

No-Cost Tools (cont'd.) Emily

- Social media
 - o Takeovers
 - o Paid content
- Pitching stories to media outlets
- Trusted promoters (bloggers, social media influencers)

Tools that Cost..... Emily

- Chamber Newspaper
- Paid social media (boosts within platforms)
- Radio
- TV

Tools that Cost (cont'd.).....Sharyn 2

- Direct Mail
- Paid Advertising

Content

- Taking credit for your work and supporting your partners to create good will and advance the Chamber's agenda
- Your Staff (!): public policy, economic development, programs and events, CEO, etc.
- Your board
- Members as the subject of stories reinforcing your mission and value proposition
- Events: write stories, posts, tweets about content-generating events
- Guest contributors, partners: members, municipal and state officials (non-elected), other agencies
- Media Outlets
- Surveys

Beefing it Up, Enhancing Your Content.....Sharyn

- Photography: supplied and owned
- Infographics
- Quotes
- Video
- Link to Chamber pages: articles, webpages, event registration
- Link to media, partners, members, legislative / town webpages
- Make it interactive:
 - o Include registration links
 - o Drive people to your website - link to "rest of the story"
 - o Add a survey

Managing the Content..... Emily

- Divide and Conquer
 - o Assign staff
 - o Enlist volunteers
 - o Utilize your digital ambassadors
 - o Hire interns
- Create a Schedule ...and stick to it
- Work backwards: set your publication date then add deadlines for each stage

Monetization of Your Outlets

Developing a ProductSharyn

- Creating a brand
- Determine what are you selling: *advertising, sponsored content, sponsorships*
- Identifying your readers
- Percentage of businesses v. consumers, etc.
- Number of readers
- What are their interests?
- Obtain metrics such as: impressions, clicks, circulation, etc.
- Setting goals for
 - o Ad to content ratio
 - o Ad sales

Pricing Sharyn | Emily

- Who are the similar media outlets in your area and what do they charge?
- What do Chamber of similar size and demographics charge?
- Consider an introductory price
- Discounts
 - o Offering discounts based on member size or profit v. non-profit status
 - o Bundle with other Chamber offerings
 - o Trade agreements
- Can non-members purchase advertising? If so, add on a premium, possibly 20 percent.

311 Main Street | Suite 200 | Worcester, MA 01608
www.WorcesterChamber.org | P 508.753.2924 | E info@worcesterchamber.org

AFFILIATE CHAMBER PARTNERS

Auburn | Blackstone Valley | Central Mass South | Wachusett Area | Webster Dudley Oxford

- Upcharge for premium placements: front page, home page, above the masthead, Inside front, back cover, etc.
- Provide analytics to advertisers
- Invoicing and tracking (fixed costs and intangibles)
 - o Work with finance department to setup billing system
 - o Require payment before ad is published
- Negotiate rates with vendors for: print materials, web updates, writers, producers, email marketing, graphics, photography, etc.

Ad Sales..... Sharyn | Emily

- Set revenue goals
- Who will do sales and prospecting
 - o Membership sales person
- Website
- E-news
- Announcements at events
- Flyers
- Ambassadors
- Ad agencies
- Marketing departments

Fulfillment, Editing, Creative..... Sharyn | Emily 3

- Require completed artwork, stories, graphics
- For advertising: don't offer design services, for advertorials, don't write it
- Instead, offer referrals to members who do design and writing
 - o Be specific about what you require such as word count, file type, resolution, deadlines
 - o Create a system to track ads
 - o Find a plug-in for online advertising
- Often, postage is most costly part of a print job

Pitfalls and Problems Sharyn | Emily 3

- Missed deadlines by staff, advertisers, contributors
- Have "public" deadlines that are several days before your "drop dead" date
- Send reminders
- Have a staffer dedicated to ensuring materials are submitted
- Advertisers who reserve space and don't follow through
- Have canned "house" ads or other content ready to insert if they don't send it before printing
- Poor writing: leave time for editing, send back for a re-write, utilize interns
- Incorrect digital formats: send it back with an urgent timeline
- "One-off" special discounts: unsustainable and time consuming

Wrap up and Q&A SessionTim