

FINDING THE FAMILY CENTER'S
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY:
A PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

by

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A THESIS

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Kelli Matthews

Many nonprofits struggle with the concept of building and communicating an organizational identity and this is true for The Co-op Family Center, a childcare center in Eugene, Oregon. This thesis explores the benefits of clearly articulating an organizational identity and the necessity to start the identity-building process from within the organization. After the discussion of organizational identity, a public relations plan is included to assist The Co-op Family Center with the creation of an identity-building process. The plan details specific steps that the nonprofit can take to define its identity and ultimately enhance overall cohesiveness with all stakeholders.

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I additionally want to thank Chris Pryor and Shane Turner for their guidance and sharing of real world knowledge. Lastly, I will always give Teri Del Rosso the credit for being the person who started the thesis process with me, even when I didn't know my topic.

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List of Accompanying Materials

1. The Family Center: A Public Relations Plan

Chapter 1: Introduction

My Relationship With The Co-op Family Center

I started working for The Co-op Family Center in 2011 in the “Wobbler” room with the 1 to 2 year olds as a student teacher. I immediately felt welcomed as the staff and children eagerly showed me the daily routine, which often included song circles, dance parties and art projects. I soon took shifts in other classrooms and am now comfortable saying I am familiar with the culture The Co-op Family Center has to offer. I overheard they wanted to change the center’s name and enhance its presence in the community, but the director, Alisa Stull, was not able to put the effort into doing so. This is how I got the idea for my thesis.

Thesis Format

My thesis is a public relations plan and does not take the form of a traditional thesis. It is a public relations plan for The Co-op Family Center, a Eugene nonprofit, assisting them with the verbalization of their identity as they change their name to, “The Family Center.” This name change is an opportunity to educate employees on the center’s values and mission as well as publicize the center within the community once internal stakeholders are fluent on the mission. I have sat down with Stull (the director) and she is excited that someone who understands the organizational culture is willing to help plan their rebranding.

Note

From now, I will be referring to what is now known as “The Co-op Family Center” as, “The Family Center.” Because I am attempting to help the nonprofit

achieve a cohesiveness of its identity and brand, it would be inconsistent branding to repeatedly use a name that we are attempting to change.

Methods

My thesis will depend upon secondary research revolving around organizational identity, branding, internal marketing and planning for nonprofits in addition to speaking with The Family Center director Alisa Stull and other staff. The Family Center does not have recorded quantitative primary research and does not feel that primary research will benefit them at this stage, as this internal public relations plan aims to set a framework for them to gather data.

Because this is a public relations plan instead of a traditional research paper, secondary research will be discussed in the following critical introduction and will motivate my decisions but will not be extensively described within the plan. While public relations mainly rely on hard data and not theory, the emphasis of the critical introduction is on the theoretical term, “organizational identity” because of the current state of The Family Center. Executive Director Alisa Stull originally wanted to enhance the center’s image in the Eugene community but was unable to concisely verbalize exactly what she wanted to communicate. This led Stull to seek a process that would allow all stakeholders to create The Family Center’s identity. The vagueness of the term “identity” is combated with the applicative nature of the public relations plan. The critical introduction aims to discuss the importance of forming an organizational identity and ensuring all stakeholders understand it, whereas the plan details how The Family Center will strategically construct this identity.

I decided to use the structure of the 10-step strategic communications plan as detailed by Joseph D. Ogden and Laurie J. Wilson in *Strategic Communications Planning*. As outlined by Ogden and Wilson, the ten steps include: background, situation analysis, core problem/opportunity, goals and objectives, key publics and messages, strategies and tactics, calendar, budget, communication confirmation table and evaluation. This format is generally used as a foundation for all public relations plans but is personalized to each organization based on its needs.

University of Oregon Public Relations Instructor, and a Eugene city councilor, Chris Pryor states that because public relations is a hands-on field, literature is not produced regarding the rationales behind the structure, but rather the format is accepted throughout the profession because it leads the client through “the logical sequence of getting from point a to point b. It starts with background because it contains facts and allows the rest of the plan to build upon these facts and speak with authority. It all builds upon itself.”¹

¹ Pryor, Chris. Personal Interview. 2 May 2014.

Chapter 2: Critical Introduction to Public Relations Plan

Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is that which is central, distinctive and enduring about an organization.² The term “identity,” allows internal and external stakeholders to “situate the organization” and is a term that travels “easily across levels of analysis.”³ The term is growing in popularity as articles emerge relating organizational identity across different platforms. While Michael Hogg and Deborah Terry discuss the importance for the individual to identify with organizational identity⁴, others have discussed the significance of organizational identity in terms of diversity⁵, managing stakeholder relationships⁶ and maintaining stability through changes and adaptations.

Finding an organization’s identity is necessary on a macro and micro level. On a macro level, external publics need to be able to understand the purpose of an organization, especially after it goes through a major change. On a micro level, “The momentum to study identity and identification also comes from a rediscovery of the importance of meaning and emotion in organizational life.”⁷ Seeking organizational identity does not mean that the values and distinctiveness of the organization are lacking, but rather that it needs to be rediscovered. It is simple for employees to become stagnant and focused on logistical tasks in place of asking the questions that Albert et al.

² Albert, Stuart, Ashfort, Blake and Dutton, Jane (2000). “Organizational Identity and Identification: Charting New Waters and Building New Bridges.” *Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 12-17.

³ Albert, Ashton, Dutton (2000).

⁴ Hogg, Michael A., and Terry, Deborah J (2000). “Social Identity and Self-Categorization Processes in Organizational Contexts.” *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(1), 121-140.

⁵ Brickson, Shelley (2000). “The Impact of Identity Orientation on Individual and Organizational Outcomes in Demographically Diverse Settings.” *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(1) 82-101.

⁶ Scott, Susanne G., and Lane, Vicki R (2000). “A Stakeholder Approach to Organizational Identity.” *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(1) 43-62.

⁷ Albert, Ashton, Dutton (2000).

suggest all organizations need to ask: “Who are we?” “Who am I?” and even “Who are they?” regarding other similar organizations.

On a personal level, having an organizational identity provides a way for the individual to gain a sense of meaningfulness and connection. Letting employees situate an organization’s sense of entity⁸ can simultaneously give individuals personal stability within the organization.⁹

In their article, “Social Identity and Self-Categorization Processes in Organizational Contexts,” Michael Hogg and Deborah Terry discuss an extension of social identity theory called “self-categorization theory.” This theory states that categorizing oneself as a group member accentuates a person’s self-perceived similarity to the group image and enhance cohesion. Like many authors, Hogg and Terry emphasize the necessity for organizations to realize that they are “internally structured” and require focus to be put upon employees as individuals who need to first understand their personal placement within the company structure before defining the organization itself. When defining organizational identity for the first time, they raise an interesting point that individuals should be asked questions to find their personal identity within the greater social context of the organization. They define, “...organizations to be groups, units or divisions within organizations to be groups, professions or sociodemographic categories that are distributed across organizations to be groups, and so forth-all with different social identities...” Shelley Brickson elaborates on social identity theory in terms of diversity by stating that the “identity orientation framework” of an organization going through change is crucial and can enhance positive outcomes (rather than

⁸ Albert, Ashton, Dutton (2000).

⁹ Hogg and Terry (2000).

minimize negative outcomes which Brickson mentions is the tendency).¹⁰ Once leaders understand the organizational structure of the group, a task structure can be developed to reward behavior positively aligned with the agreed goals and mission and this forms the “identity orientation.”

Building off of Albert et al.’s original argument that forming organizational identity comes from the need for a “situated sense of identity,” Hogg and Terry take the psychological viewpoint that the individual needs to feel a sense of belonging to a certain group to maintain self-esteem and maintain organizational loyalty. This “group” that they speak to throughout their writing takes the form of not only the organization as a whole, but also as “intersubgroups” which form naturally between employees.¹¹ Brickson warns organizations of classifying groups as “minority” or “majority,” as discomfort surrounding diversity may ensue. Minority responses tend to be reactions to majority responses instead of sharing of firsthand opinions. She says a “relational orientation” should be taken to promote empathy, and defines this as valuing group members as individuals because of their perspectives instead of valuing others based on their previous affiliations. While seemingly obvious, it takes active consciousness to maintain this empathy.

Organizations should aim for cohesion, “to secure harmonious and cooperative relationships among departments or divisions...”¹² This goes back to the power of Albert et al.’s sense of entity and feeling included in creating the organizational identity. Hogg and Terry discuss organizational identity in terms of maintaining interpersonal

¹⁰ Brickson, Shelley L (2005). “Organizational Identity Orientation: Forging a Link between Organizational Identity and Organizations’ Relations with Stakeholders.” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 50(4), 576-609.

¹¹ Hogg and Terry (2000).

¹² Brickson (2005).

relations between employees and groups of employees, but this can be discussed even further when discussing the creation of an organizational identity. Individuals want to feel like they are a part of something as much as they want to feel included in the definition of what the group represents.

Focusing primarily inward requires that all stakeholders be given the opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns when defining the organizational identity. Susanne Scott and Vicki Lane discuss organizational identities in terms of manager-stakeholder relationships and argue that an identity is best understood when it is “negotiated.” The term stakeholder is used to describe “stakeholders as groups as well as individuals, and it includes employees customers, supplies, shareholders, patrons, and board members....”¹³ The term is general in nature to encompass all individuals and groups who are directly affected by the existence of the organization.

According to Scott and Lane, the more stakeholders that are present, the more influential stakeholder opinions become. They state that previous findings reiterate that members’ identities and organizational identity are closely linked but the nature of these relationships is still unknown. “Goals, missions, practices, values and action (as well as lack of action) contribute to shaping organizational identities...” and when “...beliefs about organizational attributes become so widely accepted in the public arena that they are largely taken for granted, we can speak of this as organizational reputation.”¹⁴

Managers should not seek to merely have organizational reputation, but to have one that matches the organizational identity that the company has worked to create.

¹³ Scott and Lane (2000).

¹⁴ Scott and Lane (2000).

Scott and Lane introduce the term, Organizational Identity Construction (OIC) as processes of self-categorization where managers and stakeholders are simultaneously engaged in the construction of their individual identities in an effort to reach a mutually beneficial definition of both themselves as individuals within the organization and of the organization itself. Shelley Brickson suggests that “human capital inputs” such as relationships, are more important than the “physical inputs,” “because of the...importance of client ties to accomplishing and acquiring work” All employees possess potential, that while hard to gauge, needs facilitation and be used to the organization’s benefit. “To the extent that the social reality within which self-identification are embedded is stable (the situation and the audience remain relatively constant, or the audience is a reference group), the self-definition process becomes more consistent over time.”¹⁵ This is because individual values and beliefs resonate more strongly with those of the organization over time but this also occurs when organizations continually take time to maintain their organizational identity. Individuals are able to self-define when they are given the tools to do so. Organizations are constantly undergoing changes and thus must continuously make an effort to publicly promote the “values, norms, and beliefs” of the organization.¹⁶ Scott and Lane propose that although stakeholders cognitive image of the organization can change, which requires managers to continuously emphasize the importance of the organizational identity, there is an extent to which stakeholders must be allowed to share their personal opinions of what the organization means to them. All stakeholders must be incorporated in the OIC, but this extent to which stakeholders are allowed to share their own personal

¹⁵ Scott and Lane (2000).

¹⁶ Scott and Lane (2000).

identities after the initial processes that created the identity must be in place so the organizational identity does not weaken.

The initial encouragement of all ideas surrounding organizational identity is the first stage to enhance organizational cohesion and the understanding of the mission. After the initial OIC process, stakeholder opinions must always be valued but not encouraged to the same extent as they were during the OIC process in order to maintain the agreed upon identity. There is a “duality of identity and image” and this comes from the collaboration of stakeholders’ personal identities combined with the broader context of organizational identity.

Scott and Lane explore three mechanisms to prompt stakeholder “cognitive elaboration of an organizational identity”: presenting the organization through images, enhancing visibility of stakeholder affiliations and embedding stakeholders within the organizational community.

Scott and Lane’s article published by Joanne Martin use the term, “organizational culture” as a synonym for organizational identity.¹⁷ She emphasizes the importance of practicing the theories surrounding the management of people because it is in the application of these theories that organizations grow, not in the discussion of the theories (which are often “contradictory” she adds). But she further adds that the application of what Scott and Lane defined, as an OIC needs to be specific to each organization. In her mind, as long as all members’ viewpoints can be shared to “reveal the hidden biases and silenced voices,” the organization’s culture will be communicated.

¹⁷ Martin, Joann. (2005). Organizational Culture. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedic Dictionary of Organizational Behavior*. (Vol. 11, pp.) Oxford, England: Blackwell Publishing.

Internal Marketing

Leonard Berry is accredited with developing the term, “internal marketing” and defining it as, “working to attract, develop, motivate and maintain high-quality staff by providing them with work products they need.”¹⁸ These work products are not tangible, but rather are efforts made by leaders who actively seek to improve organizational efficiency through improving employee morale and attitudes.

Examining psychological empowerment in terms of internal marketing, Qing Yao found that psychological empowerment was “significantly and positively influenced by each dimension of internal marketing.”¹⁹ Yao wanted to deepen the understanding of internal marketing by exploring how behaviors change through internal marketing plans in addition to the usual assertion that internal marketing improves employee satisfaction. His findings state that if employees see the meaning of their work, are self-determined and see their personal contribution to the end product, they are more likely to, “promote the vision of that enterprise.”

This concept of psychological empowerment began in theory with Conger & Kanungo²⁰ and Thomas & Velthouse.²¹ Employees who are empowered will not wait passively for instructions but, rather, will actively change and affect their work environment, leading to greater efficiency.²² If employees are not only autonomously efficient, but also fluent on the organization’s brand, then the organization’s identity

¹⁸ Berry, L. Leonard. (1995). Relationship marketing of services-growing interest, emerging perspectives. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 23, 236-245.

¹⁹ Yao, Qing. “How Internal Marketing Can Cultivate Psychological Empowerment and Enhance Employee Performance.” *Social Behavior and Personality* 41.4 (2013): 529-538.

²⁰ Conger, J., & Kanungo, R. (1988). The Empowerment process: Integrating Theory and Practice.” *Academy of Management Review*, 13(3), 471-482.

²¹ Thomas, K.W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). “Cognitive elements of empowerment: An “interpretive” model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 666-681.

²² Yao (2013).

will be disseminated to external publics. Gremler et al. suggest that internal customer satisfaction is influenced by the quality of internal services to the same extent that external customers satisfaction is influenced by the quality of internal services.²³

Head of Client Strategy for Madison Performance Group, Mike Ryan emphasizes the importance of internal marketing in his article, “Make Sure Employees Deliver on Your Branding Promise.” With the general emphasis on external efforts such as advertising, pricing, packaging and promoting, Ryan asks, “Why does marketing often ignore the humans behind the brand?”²⁴ Employees deliver an organization’s mission to external publics through their actions in addition to their words, and a brand’s authenticity can be questioned if companies do not focus marketing efforts internally to their employees. Ryan believes that a brand’s reputation is affected by “...every employee interaction.” In, “Your Employees Don’t “Get” Your Brand,” John Fleming and Dan Witters expand on the importance of a brand by stating organizations need to maximize on the “power of this resource,” because if “employees don't know the brand promise, they certainly won't deliver on it.” Fleming and Witters state three standards employees should be held to: Employees must, “know what your organization stands for and what makes it different from others in the marketplace, understand your brand promise and be able to explain the most important elements of your brand identity and be empowered to deliver on your brand promise.”²⁵

²³ Gremler, D.D., Bitner, M. J. & Evans, K.R. (1994). “The Internal Service encounter.” *Internal Journal of service industry management*, 5 (2), pp. 34-56.

²⁴ Ryan, Mike. *Make Sure Employees Deliver on Your Branding Promise*. Penton Media, Inc., November 2013. Web. 15 May 2014. < Meetingsnet.com.>

²⁵ Fleming, John H., and Witters, Dan. *Your Employees Don’t “Get” Your Brand*. Gallup Business Journal, 26 July. 2012. Web. 15 May 2014. <<http://businessjournal.gallup.com/>>

Importance of Nonprofit Branding

Finney states that a brand “may be defined as a name, term, symbol, design or a combination of them intended to identify goods or services of one seller or a group of sellers...to differentiate them from those of competitors.”²⁶ A brand goes beyond the tangible elements and includes the psychological aspects such as the brand’s perception. This perception starts with the values a corporation expresses as possessing in addition to the values they actively represent. In an attempt to describe the intangible nature of a brand, Rozana Maria Nica states that a brand is a “culture of a product”²⁷

It is important to discuss branding because it is the communication process of an organizational identity. Jeffrey Bradach, Thomas Tierney and Nan Stone state that, “The absence of processes for setting employees goals and obtaining feedback...disconnects individuals and their performance from the organization’s strategy.”²⁸ This lack of informing employees how their daily tasks enhance the overall vision for the organization can create a lack of trust in the organization and can inhibit advancement.

As the largest public relations firm in the world, Edelman publishes an annual report titled, “The Edelman Trust Barometer.” In addition to commenting on countries and types of organizations that increased or decreased the public’s opinion of how trustworthy they are, the 2014 report suggests a three-step approach to gaining trust

²⁶ Finney, Sherry, Scherrebeck-Hansen, Mette. “Internal marketing as a change management tool: A case study in re-branding.” *Journal of Marketing Communications* 16.5 (2010), 325-344.

²⁷ Nica, Roxana Maria. “The Impact of Sensory Branding on Consumer Behavior.” *Journal of Media Research* 3.17 (2013): 50-74.

²⁸ Bradach, Jeffrey L., Tierney, Thomas J. and Stone, Nan. “Delivering on the Promise of Nonprofits.” *Harvard Business Review*. November 2008.

both internally and externally in an effort to progress.²⁹ It is a realistic process that nonprofits can put into place to seek input from all stakeholders in an effort to constantly improve. Step one is titled “participate” and includes seeking input from a broad range of stakeholders, engaging employees to address emotional concerns and align goals and values. Step two is titled, “advocate” and includes articulating a strategy that begins with how customers’ lives will improve. This step also emphasizes employee engagement and requires open communication between managers and employees to “foster a culture that supports employees speaking out.” Step three is titled, “evaluate” and includes setting measureable outcomes and performing these outcomes. This step emphasizes frequently reporting on progress. Overall this three-step approach focuses on the necessity to define organizational goals but not lose focus on how to tangibly perform them and see results. While organizations should constantly be going through this process, it is especially important when searching “to redefine value” to stakeholders.³⁰

Nathalie Kylander and Christopher Stone also discuss the concept of trust in their article, “The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector.” They propose a “Brand Cycle” where inside an organization, verbalizing an identity leads to trust within an organization, which then leads to a tangible impact.³¹ This can only be achieved once the mission and values have been verbalized to create an “organizational strategy.” A nonprofit must discuss its purpose of existence with internal stakeholders. This dialogue

²⁹ Edelman. *2014 Edelman Trust Barometer*. Edelman, 19 Jan. 2014. Web. 15 May 2014 <Edelman.com/insights>.

³⁰ Edelman 2014

³¹ Kylander, Nathalie and Stone, Christopher. “The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2012, 36-41.

should include a discussion of what differentiates the organization from competitors in an effort to correctly portray the organization to external publics. Stating, “nowhere is the practical value of brand integrity more evident than in...change,” when going through change (such as creating its identity for the first time) the emphasis must be completely on internal stakeholders.³² This is because “a nonprofit brand is most powerful when the organization ‘s internal identity and external image are aligned with each other and with its values and mission.”³³

When starting a process to achieve change within an organization it is important that the brand maintains tight alignment with its mission and strategy. The necessity for internal processes in search of cohesion is seen when looking at the national YMCA’s past branding efforts. Through the interviewing of YMCA employees to examine the role of organizational identity, Amber Stephenson found that during the 2010 rebranding process, employees needed constant repetition of the organization’s goals and values to instill key messages while top-level executives of YMCA sought to differentiate their organization from similar ones to enhance donor support and community relations.³⁴ Early in the rebranding process it appears that the executives were not communicating effectively to employees because their focus was on external stakeholders. This lack of internal focus and communication inhibits an organization’s ability to communicate its brand to external publics because internal publics (who are communicating the brand to others) are not proficient and thus unable to relay the brand. YMCA executives realized that if employees were not clear on the purpose of

³² Kylander and Stone (2012).

³³ Kylander and Stone (2012).

³⁴ Stephenson, A. (2013). Organizational Identity and the Rebranding of the YMCA. *Sociological Viewpoints*, 29(1), 101-119.

rebranding, the branding purpose would not be fully supported. This led executives to change their strategy to focus on employees and how they contribute to the brand rather than emphasize marketing the brand to external publics. Once employees were fluent on the branding process and purposes, the YMCA was then able to communicate the brand to stakeholders and the branding process was able to focus on external marketing.

Another interesting finding of this study comes from the YMCA's effort to become more modern and change its name to, "The Y," While employees, generally, appreciated the modernity of the new brand, they stressed the importance of the continuance of YMCA heritage and value to be expressed in newer images and expressions of the brand. If employees were not incorporated into the rebranding, these opinions surrounding the importance of the organization's history would not have been communicated. Closing these communication channels could have led to negative employee perceptions of the brand not only because the brand would not have included the attributes employees valued, but also because they were not included in the decision-making process that impacted them.

Whether stakeholders have actively thought about an organization's brand, or not, each stakeholder perceives an organization's brand and forms an organizational identity. When communication channels are opened, employees are given the space to verbalize their own brand perceptions and executives can ensure these align with the overall mission of the organization.

Uta Herbst and Markus Voeth take the idea branding one step further by using the term, "brand personality" to describe what makes an organization's brand distinguishable from competitors. This allows stakeholders to personify the brand with

human characteristics to serve as a major device in generating brand attachment and brand awareness, in much the same way as people bond themselves together.”³⁵ This is especially beneficial to nonprofits because they are generally thought of organizations that improve lives.

Once a nonprofit has constructed its identity with stakeholders, it can strategically create an identity to portray to the public with an intended brand personality. See table one to explore “The Brand Personality Scale,” which uses terms Americans often relate to brands using different categories. Forming a brand personality is a step beyond verbalizing a nonprofit’s identity. Assigning a personality to a nonprofit can engage new stakeholders and potential donors. The market orientation of a nonprofit is an “employee perceived phenomenon” only to a certain extent.³⁶ A nonprofit must focus on employees to ensure they understand the organizational identity because they are the sales force behind the mission; but at the end of the day nonprofits must realize that without clients, they do not exist.

³⁵ Herbst, Uta and Voeth, Markus (2008). “The Concept of Brand Personality as an Instrument for Advanced Non-Profit Branding—An Empirical Analysis.” *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 19(1), 71-97.

³⁶ Mulyanegara, Riza Casidy (2011). “The relationship between market orientation, brand orientation and perceived benefits in the non-profit sector; a customer-percieved paradigm.” *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 19(5), 429-441.

Chapter 3: What Does This Mean for The Family Center?

The Family Center's organizational reputation—as defined by Scott and Lane as widely accepted attributes in the public arena—is unclear. Employees do not verbalize what they perceive as the organization's reputation, and thus the community can not understand the center if the center does not first understand itself. To gain organizational reputation, The Family Center must create a process to define an organizational identity that all stakeholders share. This process will include the three most important groups of stakeholders: parents, staff and board members. Once complete, it will enable each to effectively communicate The Family Center's organizational identity to external publics. Internal stakeholders will be able to effectively communicate the center's mission once an emphasis is put on effective internal marketing and branding and the construction of an organizational identity. Seeking organizational identity does not mean that the values and distinctiveness of the organization are lacking, but rather that it needs to be articulated. According to University of Oregon Director of Library Organizational Development & Human Resources, Shane Turner, once an organization identifies the need to differentiate itself, the next step is to construct tangible steps to reach its end goal.³⁷

³⁷ Turner, Shane. Personal Interview. 12 May 2014.

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The Family Center Public Relations Plan

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The Family Center Background:

As a nonprofit organization offering high quality, affordable childcare for University of Oregon students, faculty, staff and community parents, The Family Center began as a cooperative between parents to exchange childcare without cost in 1978, starting with 10 children, growing to 50 children in 1995-96 and 100 children in 2013. In 2001 The Family Center became a contracted program with the ASUO student government of the University of Oregon and currently it provides 38% of the center's funding. This funding is dependent that the center gives priority to the children of student parents. In addition to the two full-time "lead teachers" in each of the six classrooms, (infant, wobbler, toddler, preschool, pre-k/kindergarten and school age) the majority of employees are students who work part-time. This makes The Family Center unique that, in the words of Executive Director Alisa Stuff, it is "run by students for students."

The Family Center views childhood as a precious and vital period of life with children as curious, creative and capable citizens and incorporated the Reggio-Emilia education philosophy into its belief system in 1996. This philosophy requires that children have some control over the direction of their learning and that learning be project-based where children are able to touch, move, listen, see and hear in relation to what they are learning.

The Family Center believes parents are the child's first and most important teacher and thus aims to seek their collaboration and participation. Encouraged to work in their child's classroom (parents who work in their child's classroom are given a tuition discount), parents are part of all aspects of The Family Center from cleaning to teaching to being on the board of directors.

Situation Analysis:

Since The Family Center serves an integral role in its students lives, it is important that its values, goals and mission are clear to current employees and families so its efforts are valued and stakeholders understand their own role within the organization. As one of the three centers that offers, "Child Care on Campus" at the University of Oregon, The Family Center is the only center that utilizes a specific educational philosophy (Reggio Emilia) but this fact is unknown to external publics and not emphasized within the center. One of the key issues concerning The Family Center is the understanding of what makes the organization different from other childcare centers and verbalizing its values.

After initially wanting to rebrand and engage the Eugene community to gain recognition of its values and philosophy, the center realized that the greater community's lack of awareness of the center was due to current stakeholders lack of discussion around of its mission, goals and values. While The Family Center has distinct values regarding childcare, they will go unnoticed if they are not constantly repeated and discussed. If employees are neither unaware of The Family Center's identity nor able to clearly communicate it, they will be unable to communicate it to others, such as vital stakeholders like parents. It is essential that The Family Center searches for new ways to communicate with current employees and parents to create dialogues that will result in the verbalization of the center's identity.

When an organization focuses on logistics in place of organizational identity, employees can lose focus of the mission and what role they play in the big picture of the organization. The Family Center must verbalize its values by engaging key publics and creating a process that will allow two-way communication between current stakeholders.

A communal event where employees, parents and the board of directors can share opinions and their view points is one option to create this two-way communication. Currently classroom meetings fall under the description of a “tactical” meeting where the purpose is to review activities and metrics and resolve tactical obstacles and short-term issues. But the ideal meeting style to engage all stakeholders would be, “strategic” where the purpose is to “discuss, analyze brainstorm and decide upon critical issues affecting long-term success.” Important questions to discuss at this gathering include:

- What do we do best?
- What values govern our work?
- What do we do that no one else can do/What makes us unique?
- What do you value/appreciate about The Family Center?
- What words do you use to describe The Family Center?
- Why did your family choose The Family Center?

See Appendix A for “5 Tips for Better Meetings” and Appendix B for possible formats of communal gathering

Core problem: The Family Center does not regularly emphasize its mission, goals and values, leading employees to focus on logistical tasks in place of their role within The Family Center’s identity.

Opportunity: The Family Center has the opportunity to establish a shared organizational identity by engaging employees in the verbalization of its identity.

Goal: Establish a shared mission, goals and values among all employees.

Objectives:

- Create awareness of The Family Center’s mission, goals and values among all employees and parents by November (Starting in September).
- Inform all employees and parents of the communal event as part of the identity-building process two months before February event (Starting January 2nd).
- Engage all employees in the identity-building process. To measure engagement, the following targets are set:
 - Each employee contributes to the identity-building process by attending the communal event or providing written opinions before the event.

Key Public 1: Current Employees

The Family Center has 15 full time employees, which includes two lead teachers in each of the six classrooms, a head cook and a pedagogical director and an executive director. Additionally they hire 40 to 50 student staff members to work in the classrooms, at the front desk and in the kitchen. Many student employees stay at The Family Center for many years, staying with the same children as they graduate from one classroom and move to the next; this adds to the familial feel that the center aims for.

Student employees receive news through an employee bulletin board when they clock into their shift—that is primarily used to post shifts that need to be covered—occasional emails and signs posted in the classrooms. Lead teachers receive news through a teacher bulletin board, signs posted in the classrooms and emails. They will need to utilize these communication channels as well as seek additional channels that will enable all employees to be engaged in the identity-building process. Currently there is no system to seek employee feedback, relying on the employee to take initiative to share his or her opinions. If The Family Center focuses on recognizing employees for their efforts, they will feel more appreciated and integral to the organization leading to a higher level of cohesion.

Staff members are essential to supporting and communicating The Family Center's brand to current and potential stakeholders; they are the sales people for the brand. They have to be believers and feel inspired before they can outwardly portray the organizational identity. Already fluent in the Reggio Emilia philosophy, staff will be able to incorporate the updated mission and verbalized goals while continuing their logistical focus.

Primary Message: The Family Center wants and appreciates every employee's opinion.

Secondary Messages:

- The Family Center values your input.
- The Family Center encourages employees to voice their opinions.
- The Family Center is committed to developing a shared identity.
- The Family Center is undergoing a process to build a shared identity.
- The Family Center currently perceives the following as our strengths:
 - Parental involvement
 - Reggio Emilia Philosophy
 - Student workers caring for student parents' families.

- The Family Center wants input from employees from each classroom to create ensure all viewpoints are shared.

Strategies and Tactics: Current Employees

Strategy One: Utilize current infrastructure to relay information regarding the identity building process and encourage employee participation.

Tactics:

1. Lead teachers inform student employees of the identity-building process.
 - i. This section requires that the Executive Director give lead teachers a written outline of the identity-building process and the language to inform student employees and be able to answer questions.
 - b. Lead teachers verbally communicate that The Family Center is undergoing an identity-building process to student employees at the end of student employees' shifts.
 - c. Lead teachers discuss the identity-building process at quarterly classroom meetings with all classroom employees present.
2. Written communication is posted where employees will be intercepted at different times during their shifts.
 - a. Poster is attached to the sign-in binder in each classroom so employees are intercepted at the start of their shift.
 - b. A poster is posted on each classroom door.
 - c. A poster is posted on bulletin board by front door.
 - d. Each email sent to employees has a sentence about the identity-building process.

Strategy Two: Communicate to employees to reinforce identity-building process and encourage attendance at a communal event.

Tactics

1. Lead teachers inform student employees of the communal event to build the center's identity.
 - a. Lead teachers verbally communicate to student employees at the end of student employees' shifts.
 - b. Lead teachers discuss the identity-building process and event quarterly classroom meetings leading up to the event with all classroom employees present.
2. Written communication is posted where employees will be intercepted at different times during their shifts.
 - a. Create a flyer for the event.
 - b. Poster detailing the process attached to the sign-in binder in each classroom is replaced with an event flyer.
 - c. Event flyer is posted on each classroom door.
 - d. Event flyer is put on bulletin board by the front door.
 - e. Each email sent to employees has a sentence about the communal event.

3. Send out a Qualtrics online survey (Created by The Board) asking questions that will be featured at the communal event to guide discussion and collect feedback of employees who may not attend event.

Strategy Three: Emphasize employees' value to The Family Center by encouraging feedback and providing feedback.

Tactics:

- a. Provide a closed box to each classroom where employees can share personal opinions (positive or negative) about The Family Center's identity.
 - i. A form should be provided to ease the process.
 - ii. This should be kept after the identity-building process for feedback regarding the workplace.
- b. Have lead teachers periodically check-in with student employees regarding their feelings of their position.
- c. Have lead teachers periodically check-in with student employees regarding their job performance in an effort to show that they are an integral part of each classroom's performance.

Strategy Four: Showcase a student employee each month to recognize outstanding work to other employees and parents.

Tactics:

1. Create a short form for lead teachers to fill out monthly to nominate a student employee from their classroom for, "outstanding achievement."
 - a. "Outstanding achievement" may be used in place of "employee of the month" in an effort to sound communal in place of corporate.
2. Executive Director chooses which employee receives the title
3. Lead teacher whose student employee was chosen writes one paragraph on why they are being recognized.
4. Feature the student employee in the quarterly parent e-newsletter so parents see the good work that happens while they are away.
5. Put the one paragraph description and a picture of the employee at the front of the center by the front desk.

Key Public 2: Current Parents

Generally it can be stated that parents share certain values when it comes to the care of their children. First, parents value the well being of their child both physically and emotionally; they want to know that their child is safe while they are unable to personally care for them. Second, parents value their child's education. Thirdly, parents value the opportunity to share ideas and experiences with caregivers, and to a lesser extent socialize with other parents. This is because

in addition to issues concerning the child, the relevance of parents' own needs play a key role in the operation of the center. It should be noted that parents' perception of childcare quality can be seen as more important than the actual childcare quality. If parents do not correctly perceive what nor how their children are being taught then they will not be able to appreciate the efforts of the center. Additionally, if staff and parents are defining childcare quality differently, cohesion can be inhibited so values need to be shared among these publics and this is possible through open communication.

Parents receive news from The Family Center through a weekly email from the lead teachers of their child's classroom, a monthly e-newsletter, a bulletin board in the front of the center and a classroom dry erase board that details their child's activities during the day. Posters are also occasionally posted on the binder in which they sign their children in and out of the classroom and on the classroom door.

With 80-100 children enrolled at all times, The Family Center provides care for about sixty families at any time; all coming from diverse cultural background and a variety of countries; the main minorities coming from China and Saudi Arabia. Without parents, the center will not be able to operate, so it is essential to the center's existence—especially because of their philosophy of including parents—that they feel incorporated in the center's search for a new identity. Parents need to be involved on two levels: center-wide and by their child's classroom.

Primary Message: The Family Center wants and appreciates every parent's opinion.

Secondary Messages:

- The Family Center values your input.
- The Family Center encourages parents to voice their opinions.
- The Family Center is committed to developing a shared identity.
- Your child's care will improve with a shared identity.
- The Family Center is undergoing a process to build a shared identity.

Strategies and Tactics: Current Parents

Strategy One: Utilize current infrastructure to relay information regarding the identity building process and encourage parent participation.

Tactics:

1. Lead teachers inform parents of the identity-building process.
 - i. This section requires that the Executive Director give lead teachers a written outline of the identity-building process and

- the language to inform parents and be able to answer questions.
- b. Lead teachers verbally communicate that The Family Center is undergoing an identity-building process to parents when they pick up their children.
2. Written communication is posted that will intercept parents.
 - a. Poster is attached to the sign-in binder in each classroom so parents are intercepted when they pick-up and drop off their children.
 - b. A poster is posted on each classroom door.
 - c. A poster is posted on bulletin board by front door.
 - d. Quarterly e-newsletter features information about the identity-building process.

Strategy Two: Communicate to parents to reinforce identity-building process and encourage attendance at a communal event.

1. Lead teachers inform parents of the communal event to build the center's identity.
 - a. Lead teachers verbally communicate to parents when they pick up their children.
2. Written communication is posted where parents will be intercepted.
 - a. Poster detailing the process attached to the sign-in binder in each classroom is replaced with an event flyer.
 - b. Event flyer is posted on each classroom door.
 - c. Event flyer is put on bulletin board by the front door.
 - d. Quarterly e-newsletter features information about the identity-building process and communal event.
3. Send out a Qualtrics online survey (created by The Board) asking questions that will be featured at the communal event to guide discussion and collect feedback of parents who may not attend event.

Strategy Three: Emphasize parents' value to The Family Center by encouraging feedback and providing feedback.

Tactics:

- Provide a closed box to each classroom where parents can share personal opinions (positive or negative) about The Family Center's identity.
- i. A form should be provided to ease the process.
 - ii. This should be kept after the identity-building process for feedback regarding the workplace.

Key Public 3: The Board of Directors

Currently there are seven voting members on The Board of Directors and two on-voting members, and there can be up to 12 members. While not required, all board members are parents of children who are currently enrolled at The Family Center. The Board of Director is the 501.3c required governing body of The Family Center that oversees the activities of the organization. The Board delegates the power of operation to the executive director. In order to fulfill its duty of oversight and fiduciary responsibility, the Board governs through the model of policy governance. In this model, the Board sets policies that outline high-level goals for the long-term future, and limitations on the means the director can use to fulfill those goals. Progress and performance of the organization is obtained through monitoring reports from the director. The Board is elected by the membership (enrolled families of The Family Center) and reports back to them once a year at the annual meeting, which is usually held at the beginning of the fall term (September / October). The Board meets on the fourth Monday of the month and meetings are open to the public, except for executive sessions.

The Board needs to be completely behind the identity-building process and be the leaders in detailing the process and communicating its importance to employees and parents. It is essential that board members are the leaders behind this process because they actively support The Family Center's mission.

Primary Message: As The Family Center's governing board, you have the opportunity to improve the Center's long-term future.

Secondary Messages:

- The Family Center needs your input.
- The Family Center is undergoing a process to build a shared identity.
- The Family Center is seeking an identity-building process.
- Each Board Member plays a key role in the identity-building process.

Strategies and Tactics: The Board of Directors

Strategy One: Detail and structure the identity-building process.

Tactics:

- a. Discuss questions that should be answered about The Family Center's identity.
- b. Meet over the summer to ensure that the annual meeting in September features information about the identity-building process.
- c. Look at other nonprofits' internal marketing experiences.

- d. Communications Director Marilyn Milne of Parenting Now (Previously Birth to Three) is open to sharing her rebranding plan.
 - i. 541.434.4356 | marilynm@parentingnow.org

Strategy Two: Seek feedback from employees and parents in preparation of the communal event.

Tactics:

- a. Create a Qualtrics survey for employees.
 - a. Questions should focus on why employees initially chose to be part of The Family Center and what they perceive differentiates The Family Center.
 - i. See situation analysis for potential questions.
- b. Place feedback boxes in each classroom.
 - a. Create a form to ease the process.
 - i. Form should ask if the individual is a parent or employee.
- c. Create posters that detail the identity-building process and place on:
 - a. Classroom doors
 - b. Employee sign-in binders
 - c. Parent sign-in binders
 - d. Bulletin board in front of the center
- d. Create posters that detail the communal event and place on:
 - a. Classroom doors
 - b. Employee sign-in binders
 - c. Parent sign-in binders
 - d. Bulletin board in front of the center

Strategy Three: Plan and execute a communal event to verbalize The Family Center's mission, goals and values.

Tactics:

- a. Decide on a date and time in February to host event.
- b. Decide if parents are invited to initial event or if they are invited during the second stage.
- c. Decide if all employees are required to attend or just lead staff and select student staff from each classroom.
- d. Contact potential facilitators from the University of Oregon system who would be willing to support a UO program for free.
 - a. Director of Library Organizational Development Shane Turner
 - i. 541.346.1893, smturner@uoregon.edu
 - b. Director of Organizational Development Pam Turner
- e. Prepare for the event the day of the event:
 - a. Have lead staff remind all student staff.

- b. Have kitchen staff provide food for communal event.
- c. Have front desk work-study setup the space needed for the event at the center.

Evaluation Criteria and Tools

Objective One

Criteria

All employees and parents are aware of The Family Center's current mission, goals and values among all by November.

Tools

Lead teachers personally speak to every employee and parent and check off the names of whom they have spoken to. Begins in September (when new parents and employees start).

Objective Two

Criteria

All employees and parents are informed of the communal event as part of the identity-building process two months before event (start of January).

Tools

Lead teachers personally speak to every employee and parent and check off the names of whom they have spoken to.

Objective Three

Criteria

All employees and parents are engaged in the identity-building process.

Tools

Review of who filled out the feedback boxes, online survey and attended the event is taken.

Conclusion

Seeking organizational identity does not mean that the values and distinctiveness of the organization are lacking, but rather that it needs to be rediscovered. By including parents and staff in the development of an identity and mission statement, The Family Center communicates their importance. Once internal stakeholders share the mission, The Family Center will be able to communicate it to the Eugene community and enhance its presence in the community. The first step towards this greater goal is for the Board of Directors to decide on the structure of the communal gathering and implement it. If they do not feel qualified to lead the gathering they should seek a University of Oregon staff member who is able to facilitate. Overall this plan aims to aid the center in verbalizing what makes so many families and employees excited to come to The Family Center every day.

September 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Board of Directors Meeting	18 Place Feedback boxes in classrooms	19 Place Posters	20	21
	University of Oregon Classes Begin					

September Goals

Board of Directors

Produce print materials to inform parents and employees of identity-building process

Employees

Informed of Identity-building process

Parents

Informed of identity-building process

October 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	22 Classroom meetings discuss identity	22	23	24	25
26	27 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	28	29	30	31	

October Goals	Board of Directors	Employees	Parents
	Continue researching and detailing identity-building process	Student employees are informed by lead teachers about the identity-building process	Parents are informed by lead teachers about the identity-building process

November 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	4	5 "Outstanding achievement" employee chosen	6	7	8
9	10 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	11	12	13	14	15
16	17 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	18 Classroom meetings discuss identity	19	20	21	22
23	24 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents	25	26	27	28	29
30						

November Goals

Board of Directors

Continue researching and detailing identity-building process. Seek facilitator for communal event in February.

Employees

Student employees are encouraged to provide feedback about identity in feedback boxes.

Parents

Parents are encouraged to provide feedback about identity in feedback boxes.

December 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 "Outstanding achievement" employee chosen	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Winter Break	23 Winter Break	24 Winter Break	25 Winter Break	26 Winter Break	27
28	29 Winter Break	30 Winter Break	31 Winter Break			

December Goals	Board of Directors	Employees	Parents
	Maintain awareness of identity-building process so everyone comes back from the holidays ready to participate.	Employees are engaged and providing feedback.	Parents are engaged and providing feedback.

January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents (event)	6 Place Event Posters	7	8	9 Qualtrics survey sent	10
11	12 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents (event)	13	14	15	16 Qualtrics survey sent	17
18	19 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents (event)	20	21	22	23 Qualtrics survey sent	24
25	26 Lead teachers check-in with employees and parents (event)	27	28	29	30 Lead teachers hand in "outstanding achievement" nominations	31

January Goals

Board of Directors
Planning communal event.

Employees
Informed of communal event and fill out survey.

Parents
Informed of communal event and fill out survey.

February 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 "Outstanding achievement" awarded	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13 Seek parental and employee feedback	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Seek parental and employee feedback	21
22	23 Remind employees of communal event	24 Remind employees of communal event	25 Remind employees of communal event	26 Remind employees of communal event	27 Communal Event	28

February Goals

Board of Directors

Plan and execute communal event.

Employees

See value in attending event. Giving feedback.

Parents

See value in attending event. Giving feedback.

BUDGET

Key Public	Employees	Detail	Per Item Cost	Total Projected	Sponsored Credit	Actual Projected
Strategy 1	Relay Identity Info.					
	Create Poster	Graphic Designer Parent produces	\$0	\$0	Would be \$15/hour	\$0
	Print Posters	20 @ \$2	\$2.00	\$40.00	\$0.00	\$40.00
Strategy 2	Relay event info.					
	Create Poster	Graphic Designer Parent produces	\$15/hour	\$30	\$30	\$0
	Print Posters	20 @ \$2	\$2.00	\$40.00	\$0.00	\$40.00
	Email survey		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Strategy 3	Emphasize employee value					
	Feedback boxes	Cover boxes from kitchen	\$2	\$14	\$14	\$0
Strategy 4	Showcase employee achievement					
	"Outstanding Achievement" award		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
		Public Total				\$80.00
Key Public	Parents					
Strategy 1	Relay Identity Info					Budgeted Above
Strategy 2	Relay event Info					Budgeted Above
		Detail	Price Per Item	Total Projected	Sponsored Credit	Actual Projected
Strategy 3	Encourage Feedback	Feedback Boxes				Budgeted Above
		Public Total				\$0.00
Key Public	Board of Directors					
Strategy 1	Detail Identity Process					
		Meetings and Research	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Strategy 2	Seek feedback					
	Create and email survey	Use Qualtrics, free for UO email users	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Strategy 3	Plan and execute event					
	Food	Kitchen Staff cooks for event and uses present ingredients	\$2/meal including labor	\$100	\$50	\$50
	Facilitator	Professional who facilitates meeting. Find UO affiliated for free.	\$30/hour	\$70	\$70	\$0
	Office Supplies	Pens, packets etc.	\$1.25/person	\$1.25 x 50 = 62.50	\$0	\$62.50
		Public Total				\$112.50
		Plan Total				\$192.50

Appendix A

Death By Meeting - 5 Tips for Better Meetings

Author of the best-selling book *Death by Meeting* offers insights on how to make meetings more productive and less painful.

1. Know the purpose of your meeting. Is it about solving a tactical, short-term problem, or a critical strategic issue? Are participants meant to brainstorm, debate, offer alternatives, or just sit and listen? Don't let your meeting devolve into a combination of all of these, leaving people confused about what is going on and what is expected of them.

2. Clarify what is at stake. Do participants understand the price of having a bad meeting? Do they know what could go wrong if bad decisions are made? If not, why should they care?

3. Hook them from the outset. Have you thought about the first 10 minutes of your meeting and how you're going to get people engaged? If you don't tee up your topic and dramatize why it matters, you might as well invite participants to check-out.

4. Set aside enough time. Are you going to be tempted to end the meeting before resolution has been achieved? Contrary to popular wisdom, the mark of a great meeting is not how short it is, or whether it ends on time. The key is whether it ends with clarity and commitment from participants.

5. Provoke conflict. Are your people uncomfortable during meetings and tired at the end? If not, they're probably not mixing it up enough and getting to the bottom of important issues. Conflict shouldn't be personal, but it should be ideologically emotional. Seek out opposing views and ensure that they are completely aired.

These five tips alone can improve the quality of our meetings, both in terms of the experience itself as well as the outcome. And considering the almost universal lethargy and disdain for meetings, they can transform what is now considered a painful problem into a competitive advantage.

Appendix B



Death by Meeting



Daily Check-in

Weekly Tactical

Monthly Strategic

Quarterly Off-site Review

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Simple wisdom for organizations.

page 1



Death by Meeting

Meeting Type	Time required	Purpose/Format	
Daily Check-in	5 – 10 minutes	Share daily schedules and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don't sit down • keep it administrative • don't cancel even when some people can't be there
Weekly Tactical	45 – 90 minutes	Review weekly activities and metrics, and resolve tactical obstacles and issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • don't set agenda until after initial reporting • postpone strategic discussions
Monthly Strategic (or adhoc strategic)	2 – 4 hours	Discuss, analyze, brainstorm and decide upon critical issues affecting long term success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limit to one or two topics • prepare and do research • engage in good conflict
Quarterly Off-site Review	1 – 2 days	Review strategy, competitive landscape, industry trends, key personnel, team development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get out of office • focus on work; limit social activities • don't over-structure or over-burden the schedule

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