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Final Situation Analysis and Campaign Plan

Situation Analysis

Client Description, Mission and Goals

The McMinnville Junior Baseball Organization (JBO) is a youth baseball club based in McMinnville, Oregon. The teams range in age from third grade to eighth grade. There are currently 131 children in the program. Within each age group, there are several teams that are organized by skill. For example, the Federal team in each age group has the top skilled players, the American team in each age group has average skilled players and the National team in each age group has the least skilled players. According to Jason Bizon, the President of McMinnville JBO, the overarching goals of the organization are to promote and encourage a healthy and happy environment for children, teach them the game of baseball, inspire competitive spirits and to prepare these children for high school baseball. The organization is run entirely by volunteers and parents. It has an elected board of directors (17 members) that oversee and administer the organization.

External Environment

McMinnville JBO is a part of the Junior Baseball Organization of Oregon, which is a non-profit corporation that exists to provide young boys and girls an opportunity to participate in an organized baseball experience. JBO is aligned with high schools around the state of Oregon

and provides a competitive league for local youth baseball organizations. There are 23 total youth baseball clubs involved in JBO in Oregon. There are other options for youth baseball players to compete in, including Babe Ruth, Little League or club ball. However, thankfully for McMinnville JBO, the closest alternative is located in Salem. According to Jason Bizon, very few youth baseball players that live in McMinnville choose the alternatives.

As for external factors that McMinnville JBO should be aware of, one of the biggest issues, in the eyes of Bizon, is competing for field space. There are a lot of other youth sport organizations that also need fields to practice on, which makes it difficult to reserve spaces. Another external factor that the organization suffers from is having difficulties working with the school district. The organization has been denied field access to the high school facilities as well as denied the ability to send flyers or newsletters home with children in their homework folders. This has caused a barrier to form between the organization and the children of the community.

Lastly, another external factor noted by Bizon is how technology has changed the game of baseball. Now, parents can follow the game from home using an app called "GameChanger." The app is run by a parent at the game who gives live updates to all the people who subscribe to the team. This has eliminated people keeping score with paper and pencil, and maybe created a loss of connection to the game of baseball, according to Bizon.

Organization Analysis

Strengths

One of the biggest strengths of the organization is its board, according to Bizon. The board meets monthly and works tirelessly to improve the organization, despite the lack of compensation. They all have a common goal in mind and that is to develop youth baseball and

give back to the children of the McMinnville community. Another strength of the organization is that it has a solid operating budget of \$55,000 per year. Bizon says that this is a good amount for a youth organization, yet the organization uses all of it by the end of the year. Bizon says that the organization buys high quality jerseys, helps pay tournament fees and gives scholarships to some athletes who cannot afford to pay the registration fee. The organization does a good job of managing the budget to ensure that all the money spent is put back into the athletes and their youth baseball experience.

Additionally, another huge strength for the organization is the community support. Most coaches are parents of children involved in the program. Several parents volunteer to be coordinators for summer tournaments and volunteer hours. Additionally, parents volunteer to help run the GameChanger app that I mentioned earlier. Not only do parents get involved, but alumni of the program do as well. McMinnville JBO is a feeder program to the high school, and many youth baseball players go on to play in college. Some have even made it to the MLB. Many of these alumni return to give back to the organization that developed them as players, according to Bizon.

Lastly, another strength of McMinnville JBO is its unique tryout process. Every year in the early spring, players have to tryout again. Many youth baseball programs have coaches evaluate players and coaches choose their teams. This is problematic because most coaches are volunteer parents, which causes bias to enter into the selection process. McMinnville JBO has attempted to eliminate this bias by hiring trained baseball evaluators to come in and run tryouts. Bizon says that this has eliminated some of the politics involving parent complaints and issues with favoritism.

Competitors

McMinnville JBO's biggest competitor is other youth sports such as lacrosse, spring soccer and track and field. Not only does the program compete for players, but also for field space. As I mentioned earlier, the organization has to share field space with these other spring sports. Although baseball is played on a diamond, sports like soccer often use the outfield to practice on. Additionally, Bizon says that the organization loses a few players a year to other youth sports.

Other competitive youth baseball leagues might also serve as competitors to the organization, including Babe Ruth, Little League and club ball; however, as I mentioned earlier, the closest alternative is in Salem or Portland. Many families do not want to take the time to drive their children that far for practices and games, so many stay in McMinnville and participate in JBO.

Internal Threats

Some internal threats to the success of a public relations campaign include its lack of social media, the cost to play and the volunteer board members. Although Bizon stated that the board members are a strength to the organization, they may not be as willing to dedicate the time it takes to run a public relations campaign without any compensation. A public relations campaign takes a lot of time and energy and board members might not be as dedicated if they have to spend more time voluntarily working. As for the lack of social media usage, that is something that can be improved with a public relations campaign; however, it is important to note that creating a following on social media takes quite a bit of time, which may delay the campaign's progress. Lastly, perhaps the biggest internal threat is the cost of paying to play. The

organization offers scholarships, but not a lot of them. This may deter a child from participating in the program because it's just too much money. This is one of Bizon's biggest concerns with the organization and all youth sports today.

Internal Resources

Some internal resources that Bizon relies on heavily to make executive decisions about the organization are his board members, the head baseball coach at the high school and some of the alumni of the program. The board of the organization is 17 members, which provides a lot of different perspectives as well as manpower to work together on big projects. The head baseball coach at McMinnville helps Bizon a lot with how to run the program. Eventually, these youth athletes will be playing for the high school, so McMinnville JBO is meant to prepare these athletes for high school baseball. Lastly, as I have previously mentioned, the alumni of the program are a huge asset. Many alumni have far more baseball experience than some of the volunteer parent coaches. It is important to use and take advantage of those relationships. Lastly, the biggest internal resource is word of mouth. There are 131 athletes in the program and they all have family members. The best way to spread information in a community is to ask people to talk about it and speak highly of it. A good reputation can inspire others to get involved in the organization as well.

Problem/Opportunity Statement

The biggest opportunity McMinnville JBO has involves its annual Home Run Derby. Because the organization is funded entirely by its youth athletes and their parents, there is not a lot of extra money available to spend on other things. Something that this organization

desperately needs is its own facilities. According to Bizon, a new facility would greatly benefit the organization. In order to afford a new facility, the organization needs to start fundraising.

The annual Home Run Derby is one of the organization's biggest fundraising events of the year. The structure of the event is that each player in the organization raises a minimum of \$100. If a player reaches this goal, he or she has five chances to hit a ball off the tee in hopes of hitting a homerun. There are several prizes available for the top fundraisers and the winners of the Home Run Derby competition. Additionally, the organization sells concessions and plays music over a sound system throughout the event. It truly is a small festival for the youth baseball community.

Bizon says that the Home Run Derby usually generates about 25 percent of the annual budget. At last year's event, Bizon said that there were about 40 participants in the Home Run Derby. Imagine the kind of money the organization could bring in if all 131 youth baseball players of McMinnville JBO participated in this event. Not only do these children attend the event, but also their family members. The more people who attend the event, the more money will be raised for the organization. The goal for the organization should no longer be to break even, but rather to exceed the budget and begin saving for a new facility. This will most likely take several years of saving; however, a fun and family-oriented community event is a great way to attract members of the McMinnville community and maybe even encourage them to donate.

Target Audience

The publics that will be targeted in this public relations campaign are the players of McMinnville JBO, their family members and young families in the McMinnville community. The shared values of these publics might be, but are not limited to: their love for baseball, their

needs to fill weekends with fun, family-oriented activities and their shared love of giving back to children in the McMinnville community. I plan to publicize this event as McMinnville JBO's search for a "home". Someday, this organization will finally call a facility "home" and most families can relate to the emotions and ideals that surround the word "home," which may encourage attendance and maybe some donations.

To encourage these publics to attend, McMinnville JBO should plan on inviting some notable McMinnville community baseball alumni. This might encourage baseball fans and youth players to attend the event because they know that they might get a chance to meet someone who has made it to the MLB. Bizon noted that there are several McMinnville baseball alumni that already do a lot to support the organization. This could be a great opportunity to use those connections and invite these players back. It also might be encouraging to youth baseball players if some of the Linfield College baseball players attended the event. This would give youth players an opportunity to interact with college players and ask them about their college experiences.

Campaign Plan

Goal

The goal of this public relations campaign is to raise money for McMinnville Junior Baseball Organization's new baseball facility. The team is in need of a new facility because they currently struggle to find field space during the season due to other youth sports that also want to use the field space. The organization will use its biggest opportunity: The Home Run Derby, to raise funds for this major change.

There are several options on where the organization could build a baseball facility. The organization could work with the school district to potentially expand the already present facility on the school district's property. This is most likely not an option considering that President Jason Bizon has already stated difficulties in working with the school district. The organization could similarly reach out to the City of McMinnville and ask if they would be willing to expand the baseball facility at Joe Dancer Park. The final option would be to start from scratch and build an entire facility from the ground up on leased or bought land. This is a highly expensive option and would take many years to fund. After looking online, McMinnville land that would be big enough to build a baseball facility costs 1.5 to 2 million dollars to lease on average. This leaves the organization with one reasonable option: working with the City of McMinnville to expand the facility at Joe Dancer Park. This way, the organization will not have to buy or lease the land, and the money can go directly into building the new fields and maintaining the one that is already there, rather than starting from the ground up.

Overall, this is going to cost a lot of money, so this PR campaign should be used over several years to obtain enough funds to build the new facility. Objectives will fluctuate year to year based on how close the organization is to achieving its goals, however, strategies and tactics should be similar. It's important to update dates and changes to the organization, but for the most part, these tactics and strategies should remain the same. This PR campaign also depends on how willing the City of McMinnville is to work with MJBO, which I am assuming in this case, that the city is willing and has given the organization the go ahead to start fundraising.

Objective

The only objective of this public relations campaign is to raise \$25,000 at the Annual Home Run Derby. This event usually brings in 25 percent of the annual operating budget, which is around \$15,000. That first \$15,000 will go straight to the organization's operating budget, while the remaining \$10,000 will go toward fundraising for the new facility. I chose a \$25,000 goal because if all 131 children participated in the fundraiser and each brought in the minimum donation of \$100, the organization will have raised around \$13,000. The remaining \$12,000 will be obtained through top fundraisers, businesses that decide to sponsor the event and concession sales.

Strategy 1

The first strategy that McMinnville JBO will use to accomplish this objective is using owned media to inform current members and potential members on the needs of the organization as well as the overall structure of McMinnville JBO. In addition to informing current and potential members, the owned media will encourage these people to attend and participate in the Home Run Derby. Owned media is a great way to connect with people who are already members and is a cost efficient way to reach out to potential members or the organization.

Tactic 1

The most effective way to communicate through owned media for this public relations campaign is to create a brochure that includes information on the basic structure of the organization, as well as information on the Home Run Derby and how this event will help support the organization's needs for a new

baseball facility. The brochure will be dispersed at practices by team parents or head coaches. It will also be dispersed to the McMinnville Recreation League to inform potential new members of the fundraiser. This tactic will be used to inform and encourage participation to current members and potential members of the organization.

Strategy 2

The second strategy of this public relations campaign will be to use interpersonal communications in order to connect with current members of the organization, alumni and community. This strategy will take place prior to the event and during the event. Connecting with people is the best way to raise money because people are more likely to donate if someone asks them face to face rather than through a different medium.

Tactic 2

The first tactic that McMinnville JBO will use for intrapersonal communications is to contact notable alumni and ask them to attend the event and/or donate to building the new facility. By bringing notable alumni to the event, this may encourage more people to attend and participate. Having the opportunity to connect with someone who made it to college baseball could be really inspiring to young athletes and probably really rewarding for some of the alumni.

Tactic 3

The second tactic that the organization will use as intrapersonal communications is creating a donation booth on the day of the event. This tactic

will be used to collect participants donations as well as encourage attendees to donate more money. This will also serve as an informational booth for McMinnville JBO and share the plans that the organization has for the new baseball facility.

Strategy 3

The third strategy the organization will use to accomplish the objective is earned media. This strategy will be used to inform the community and persuade them to attend the Home Run Derby, while also supporting the local youth baseball community. It will also include a call to action, asking community members to donate. The strategy specifically applies to the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which states that a consumer of a message will first become aware of it, then they will act on it and then they will adopt it. Using earned media will make the McMinnville community aware and hopefully act on that awareness of McMinnville JBO's need for a new baseball facility by donating to the Home Run Derby.

Tactic 4

The first tactic the organization will use to accomplish this strategy is a press release about the annual Home Run Derby. The organization will send the press release to The News Register in McMinnville, Oregon several weeks prior to the event. The News Register is a local newspaper that it will attract the target audience of this organization. This tactic will encourage community members to attend the event and/or donate to the cause. It will also inform them of what will happen during the event.

Tactic 5

The second tactic that the organization will use under the earned media strategy is a 60-second public service announcement (PSA). This PSA will be sent to the local radio station in McMinnville: KLYC. The organization will send the PSA to this radio station for the same reason as the press release: it addresses the target audience of the McMinnville community. This tactic will also encourage members of the community to attend the event and/or donate to the organization. The overall tone of the PSA will be fun and family friendly. Upbeat music will be played in the background as the details of the event are read. This will hopefully associate happiness with the inviting message in the listeners mind. This tactic should be sent to KLYC several weeks prior to the event to generate interest in the McMinnville community through a different medium.

Tactic 6

The final tactic under this strategy that organization will use is a fundraising letter. This letter will be sent out to local businesses to encourage donations. The fundraising letter will also offer sponsorship opportunities for businesses at the actual Home Run Derby. In addition, the letter will come with a flyer that advertises the Home Run Derby. McMinnville JBO will ask that businesses donate and put put this flyer up and encourage their customers to attend the event. This tactic will be sent out several months prior to the event so that when other things are sent out about the event, sponsorship opportunities can be fulfilled.

Strategy 4

The fourth strategy used to accomplish the objective will be using shared media to get current members of the organization and McMinnville community members excited about Home Run Derby. This strategy will be used to increase the overall awareness of event and will be used prior to the event.

Tactic 7

The tactic the organization will use to fulfill this strategy is an Instagram hashtag drawing. Any of the parents or children that post a picture with “#MacHomeRunDerby2020” will be put into a drawing to win a \$100 Dutch Bros gift card (or something like it). By providing this incentive to participants, this will get them more interested in posting something with the hashtag. This tactic increases awareness in the community, while also giving current members a reason to talk and post about the Home Run Derby.

Communication Theory

A communication theory that can be used to describe the desired effect of this public relations campaign is the diffusion of innovations theory. Over time, this event will gain more and more popularity through the variety of media outlets that the information is being dispersed through. It will be a community event that supports young future athletes. First, people will become aware of the needs of McMinnville JBO and the event created to support those needs. Next, members of the organization and the community will decide to attend the event. After one time of attending the event, they will decide to return again the next year if the organization hosts

a successful event. Ideally, this public relations campaign should be used over several years until the ideal amount is raised to build the new facility.

References

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