

APPLYING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT MODEL TO THE ENHANCEMENT OF PUBLIC-
ORGANIZATION RELATIONSHIP

A CREATIVE PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview of Non-Profit Art Organizations

Nonprofit organizations such as the Muncie Symphony Orchestra are great contributors to the “quality of American life” (Cutlip, et al., 2000, p. 550). The number of non-profit organizations has grown exponentially in the United States in the last decade (Salamon, 2002). As a result, the competition for donors has multiplied. In 2012, public charities reported more than \$1.65 trillion in revenues. Total foundation giving reached \$50.9 billion dollars in 2012, up 1% from 2011 (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2012). In order to prepare for these incoming funds, non-profit organizations have been spending more of their resources on their fundraising and development programs (Grace & Wendroff, 2001). Nevertheless, with the increase in donations comes the increase in the number of nonprofit organizations for different causes. The economic downturn has diverted a lot of the funding to organizations that provide shelters, food, health care and other unemployment agencies. This focus has had a direct impact on funding for the arts originations.

In discussing “arts nonprofit,” there are three main categories: performing arts, visual arts, and arts education programs. Performing arts include dance, opera, drama, and musical theatre of all types. Visual arts refer to paintings, drawings, sculptures, museum exhibitions, etc.. Lastly, arts education programs are designated to provide training to the publics. Most arts organizations are 501(c) 3 nonprofits, which are established to serve the public interest. A survey conducted by American for the Arts showed that the number of arts nonprofit organizations increased over the past 10 years; however, the attendance at art events declined (Trescott, 2010).

1.2. Overview of Symphony Orchestras

Symphony orchestras were initially established in large cities in the mid-nineteenth century by European immigrants to maintain their cultural tradition. Now, orchestras are an integral part of many American towns (Scholz, 2001). Not only do they provide employment for a large number of professional musicians, but they also “have brought international recognition and civic pride to many American cities, have rejuvenated the downtowns of others, and have contributed to the economic impact of most by churning billions of dollars through local economies over the decades,” according to the American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL) (ASOL, 1993).

Orchestras are an important cultural institution as they provide and deliver art to the public.

However, during the 1970s and 1980s, expenses to operate orchestras began to exceed average income from ticket sales (ASOL, 1992). Along with the financial downturn in the 1980s was an increase in production costs, including salaries for artists and more concerts per season.

According to the American Symphony Orchestra League, the cost of serving the average audience rose from \$5.00 in 1971 to \$26.17 in 1991 (ASOL, 1992). Consequently, orchestras had to raise the ticket prices to cover costs, which also meant that they were alienating economically challenged people. From the 1987 through 2000 concert seasons, 63 large U.S. symphonies were in deficit financially (Flanagan, 2012, p.2). Orchestras had a short period of strong financial positions in 1997-1999 when the general economic condition was supportive.

Yet, finances declined during the recession that began in late 2007. The pressure had pushed a lot of major orchestras into bankruptcy, including the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra (2003), orchestras in Birmingham, Alabama (1993), Oakland (1994), San Jose, California (2002), Honolulu (2009), and Louisville, Kentucky (2010). Some of these eventually reopened and reorganized.

Amid this financial struggle, orchestras were under fire for not being as appealing to the general public tastes as before. This form of entertainment is now considered elitist and became out of touch with their communities (ASOL, 1993, p.138). A series of surveys conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) since 1982 about performing arts audiences in the United States revealed that there has been a decline in the overall participation in classical music by the population. The number of adults who said that they attended at least one classical music concert dropped from 11.6% to 9.3% (NEA, 2009). This percentage reflected an even larger number when considering the increase of populations over this six-year period. Among them, the white demographics tend to be more likely to attend an orchestra concert than other groups, and women are more likely to attend than men. Also, the frequency of concert attendance increases with income and education level. Even though unemployment rate was identical during this surveyed time, concertgoers did not keep pace with the increase of population (NEA, 2009).

Making the matter worse, sales of seasonal tickets tend to accompany declining concert attendance. In 1991, the orchestras sold an average of five subscription tickets for every single ticket. By 1997, that ratio was three to one (Flanagan, 2008). The drop in the number of subscriptions can cause long-term effect to the orchestras since seasonal ticket holders are more reliable sources of philanthropic donation than single ticket holders. In an effort to increase attendance and revenue many orchestras have been trying to add more concerts to their yearly programs. Total concert attendance did improve, but each concert only yielded a small increase in attendance as well as revenues. Research has shown that, “Even though many costs incurred by symphony orchestras are fixed annually, the incremental costs of adding another concert are usually far from zero”(Flanagan, 2012, p.2). Eventually, the additional cost for adding concerts will worsen financial deficits.

1.3. Symphony Orchestra and the Needs for Public Relations

Besides increasing the diversity of concerts, the typical promotional activities that orchestras have been utilizing to increase attendance per concert are direct mail, email, print and broadcast advertising (Flanagan, 2012, p. 28). The average budget spending on marketing of an orchestra ranges from 11% to 21% of overall expenses. However, whether these activities are effective or not is still a question. Surveys have shown that even when budgets spent on marketing have increased, the number in attendance per concert has decreased since the late 1980s (p.35).

Why do arts nonprofit organizations in general, and orchestras in particular, need public relations? By integrating the practice of public relations, organizations can create two-way relationships. As Cutlip et al. (2000) suggested: “More effective two-way communication” with all relevant publics “will be required in order to build and maintain the relationships needed to achieve public-interest goals” in the nonprofit sector (p. 536).

Only by understanding its public can an organization find a way to attract and increase attendance and improve performance to satisfy the public.

When used to optimum advantage, public relations thinking contributes an essential viewpoint to virtually every kind of policy and management decision: a viewpoint that reflects existing public attitudes, predicts the decision’s impact on those attitudes, and proposes appropriate communication methods and channels to make it understandable and acceptable. (Adams, 1983)

Today, a successful public relations requires a relationship with, rather than simply to, the public – an exchange of information and ideas. The emerging concept of public relations indicates that firms need to listen to and communicate with their publics and be genuinely responsive to public needs. Public relations is a planned and deliberate process that includes research and analysis, policy and procedural formation or recommendations supporting public interest, and communication with and feedback from numerous publics (Kinzey, 1999). Due to lagging

support from foundations and the government entities for cultural institutions, the nonprofit sector will benefit from public relations practice to reduce the cost and maximize the results. The viability of nonprofit organizations depends on organizational credibility and on successfully engaging with a wide array of constituencies, including contributors, volunteers, staff members, the population being served, the media, and the public at large (Feinglass, 2005). Effective public relations in the nonprofit sector plays a critical role in helping to raise money and attract new members and volunteers and retain current members and volunteers (p.170)

1.4. Muncie Symphony Orchestra (MSO)

Formerly known as Muncie Civic and College Symphony Orchestra, the orchestra was founded in 1947. The goal of this professional orchestra was to not only to enhance the quality of the Ball State music program, but also to form a link between the college and Muncie community through music while giving Ball State University (BSU) faculty and students an outlet to pursue musical excellence in performance. The orchestra was incorporated in 1958, and over the years has evolved and expanded. The 70-plus musicians consist of resident music faculty, professional freelance musicians from the tri-state area (Indiana, Ohio and Michigan), and BSU students. In 1955, the Muncie Symphony League (MSL) was created to help support the orchestra. Also known as the Volunteer League, MSL promotes the orchestra, raises funds through projects, and hosts a variety of community projects. MSO and MSL work together to continually engage, educate, entertain, and enrich the Muncie community with music.

The orchestra wants to aim at BSU students and alumni who reside in the Muncie as symphony's target audience to attract in the years to come. The organization, however, is having trouble finding their niche to become more appealing and relevant to this demographic. Not only MSO, but also other symphonies around the country are facing the same issue (Glynn, 2000). Despite

the increase in education level, income and population, a smaller number of college graduates are choosing classical concerts as their entertainment venue. “Our audience is aging more rapidly year after year,” said the MSO executive director during an initial interview about the organization. This problem is not unique to MSO. An analysis of League of America Orchestra data confirms that since 1982, classical music audiences over the age of 45 years have increased by 19% while the population in that age group has only increased by 9% (2009).

According to Kinzey (1999), another concern for people working in the nonprofit world is the lack of attention to competition in the area. The MSO office is located on the Ball State University campus and most of their events are held at Ball State’s auditorium and theatre. They have to directly compete with the Ball State Symphony Orchestra , which also offers many activities on campus. Besides, Indianapolis, Marion, Anderson and other surrounding cities also have their own symphony orchestras that are competing with the MSO.

Acknowledging the varieties of issues that the MSO is facing, the primary purpose of this creative project is to understand the relationship between public engagement and the enhancement of positive outcome in relationship management including trust, satisfaction, loyalty and word of mouth. Findings from this research will be used to facilitate a public relations plan for the Muncie Symphony Orchestra.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Public Relations Definition

The practice of public relations can be traced to the late 1800s when managers in the railroad industry attempted to gather support for their business. However, the field began to take flight as an effective corporate instrument in the early 20th century (Culpit, 2013). Many industries started public relations campaigns to gain approval for monopolies under the notion of “public interest” (Lieber, 2005). The main platform for these campaigns was often the mass media from where most early practitioners traced their career. As an early practitioners stated: “I was in the publicity business. I was a press agent. Very simply my job was to get the client’s name in the paper” (Culpit, 1994, p. 11). This perception, to a certain extent, remains true today. With rapid growth, the field attracted visionaries such as Edward Bernays, Author Page and Harwood Childs. They viewed public relations as a way of balancing the interests of organizations and their publics. Nevertheless, the dominant view of the practice of public relations during this time remained to generate free favorable publicity from the media (Broom & Dozier, 1990)

Until recently, the emergence of the field posed a need for a new definition. Many scholars have devoted whole chapters to distinguish public relations from journalism, advertising and marketing. Grunig and Hunt (1984) simply defined public relations as “the management of communication between an organization and its publics” (p. 6). Culpit, Center and Broom elaborated more:

Public relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends (Stacks, 2010, p. 22).

Still, the question of what is public relations remained muddled. To address this issue, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), called for submissions from scholars and formally adopted a definition that has been widely used: “Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” This definition has remained relevant, in part, because it implies the functions of public relations, including research, planning, communication and evaluation.

Despite the fact that a number of scholars have been challenging different perspectives and roles of public relations, many organizations still view the main function of the profession as merely to handle media relations. The contribution of public relations toward organizations’ goals is still a mystery to many executive managers and even practitioners (Broom and Dozier, 1990; Hon, 1998). Thus, public relations researchers continue to branch out to seek a theoretical framework to guide its practical application and prove its value to the organization.

2.2. Public Relations Theory

In the late 1980s, scholars were sought after to give voice to the need for public relations theory in order to provide some conceptual tools for the field. Now, that need has shifted to diversity and competition among theories in public relations. Botan and Taylor (2004) summarize that the state of public relations theory has become a major area of applied communication. Research in the public relations field has increased rapidly over the past decades. In the area of research, as they reported:

With about 250 papers submitted to the public relations divisions in the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the International Communication Association (ICA), the National Communication Association (NCA), and the International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRRC) in 2013, public relations may be poised to become one of the most researched areas of communications. (p.1)

The discipline has become much more of a corporate communication practice than a theoretically grounded and research based area. During the past 30 years, a leading body of work has been developed around the Symmetry/Excellence theory proposed by James Grunig. This theory identifies four theoretical models for public relations: press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

The first two models utilize the one-way model of communication. Press agency, or the publicity model, utilizes communication for propaganda that attempts to draw media attention. The public information model resembles the idea of a “journalist-in-residence” who is in charge of disseminating information to specific publics. The two remaining models depend on two-way communication between the organization and its environment. Communication in the asymmetrical model focuses on advocacy, persuasion, and presenting an organization’s claims. In contrast, the symmetrical model puts the public and their interests above the organization, incorporating diverse views and encouraging innovation and community building (Spicer, 1997). While different models apply to various situations, L. Grunig and J. Grunig (1992) found that proper training and experiences lead public relations practitioners to use the two-way symmetrical model, which focuses on communication techniques to further mutual understanding and benefits between an organization and its public.

Over the years these models have been researched and debated, but in *Excellence in Public Relations and Effective Organizations*, L. Grunig, J. Grunig and Dozier (2002) maintained that they advocate for the symmetrical model to public relations. This approach helps balance the interests of the organization and its publics, is based on research, and uses communication to manage conflict with strategic publics. In the long run, it will produce better relationships with publics.

Public relations theory has evolved over the last three decades. Excellence theory was the dominant paradigm guiding public relations research and was treated as a general theory that explained ethical public relations practices. Over time, several other theories emerged as alternatives for explaining the complexity of communication and relationships.

The view of public relations as relationship management traced back to Ferguson's call for research about relationship in public relations in 1984 (Ledingham, 2003a). She reviewed nine years of research published in *Public Relations Review* and concluded that a paradigm focus for the field "would greatly enhance the probability of productive theory development" (p.182). That paradigm shift was relationship: "By this, the author means that the unit of study should not be the organization, nor the public, nor the communication process. Rather, the unit of study should be the relationships between organizations and their publics." Since then, researchers are beginning to recognize relationships, rather than communication, as the central role of public relations (p.184).

New theoretical frameworks that have helped move the field forward include organization–public relations (OPR) (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, 2000), contingency (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997), and dialogue (Botan, 1997; Kent & Taylor, 2002; Pearson, 1989a, 1989b; Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012).

2.3. Organization-Public Relationship (OPR)

Scholarship concerning the management of OPR has increased dramatically in recent years. The relational perspective has been applied in various research topics, including issue management (Bridges & Nelson, 2000), crisis management (Coomb, 2000), community relations (Ledingham & Brunig, 2001), public affairs (Ledingham, 2003b), among others.

Emerging from this perspective, Ledingham and Bruning have examined symmetrical communication as the model of public relations practice. They argued that Grunig's 1992 concept of public relations as "building relationships with publics that constrain or enhance the ability of the organization to meet its mission" was critical in shifting the emphasis in public relations from managing publics and public opinion to a new emphasis on building, nurturing and maintaining relationships. The major premise of relationship management holds that "public relations balances the interests of organizations and publics through the management of organization-public relationships" (Ledingham, 2003a, p.181).

A study of 323 organizations in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom conducted by J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2000) showed that understanding OPR can help identify an organization's strategic publics and develop communication techniques to build relationships with those publics. Effectively managing organizational-public relationships overtime also results in mutual understanding and benefit for the interaction among organizations and publics (Ledingham, 2003b)

Ehling (1992) argued that the shift from changing publics' beliefs to building and maintaining relationships "indicates an important change in the conceptualization of the primary mission of public relations." Broom et al. (1997) also noted the importance of a definition of OPR as a basis for future development of the relational perspective. Without a definition for relationship, "researchers cannot derive valid and reliable measures useful for positing and testing public relations theory," and "practitioners cannot describe and compare organization-public relationships with any validity or reliability" (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997, p. 86). In response, Ledingham and Bruning (1998) offered the following: "An organization-public relationship is the state which exists between an organization and its key publics, in which the

actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural or political well-being of the other” (p. 62). Subsequently, Broom et al. (2000) suggested that, “relationships consist of the transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organization and lead to mutual benefit, as well as mutual achievement” (p. 91).

There is an existing gap between organization-public relationship quality and public’s actual supportive behaviors such as being a loyal supporter or advocate for an organization (Kang, 2014). Scholars and professionals are recently putting efforts and encouraging more research upon understanding this concept. The concept of engagement is viewed as a critical element to fill that gap. Recently, the *Public Relations Review* has devoted a whole issue about engagement (Johnston, 2014). In the corporate sector, Richard Edelman, president and CEO of Edelman Public Relations, also agreed with this point of view in his lecture at Maryland University. His presentation titled “Public Engagement: The Evolution of Public Relations” was about the shifting paradigm from public relations to public engagement. (Edelman, 2008). Scholars and professionals in public relations began to view engagement as “the ultimate marker or maker of a good organization–public relationship.” This study adopts Kang’s conceptualization of public engagement and her proposed public engagement scale is assessing the public-organization relationship between MSO and their stakeholders (Kang, 2014).

2.4. Conceptualize Engagement

The concept of engagement has appeared in a variety of business and organization contexts theoretically and practically. Theoretically, public relations scholars view engagement as a concept that is linked to the importance of cognitive involvement and related behavioral outcomes (Slater, Chipman, Auld, Keefe, & Kendall, 1992). Botan & Taylor (2004) viewed it as a process of meaning-making between organizations and its stakeholders: “This perspective is

long term in its orientation and focuses on relationships among publics and organizations.” (p. 93). Practically, engagement has been applied to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of strategic communication in for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. It brings positive outcomes and serves as a framework to maximize organizational opportunities (Taylor, Vasquez & Doorley, 2003). In a review of the public relations literature, Taylor & Kent (2014) concluded that the term engagement has been used primarily in five different types of communication contexts: social media engagement, employee engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and engagement, civic engagement and social capital, and dialogic engagement.

Employee engagement is one of the main themes of this concept. Engagement in the workplace seeks to foster greater loyalty and job satisfaction (Men, 2012; Ruck & Welch, 2012; Tkalac Verc̃ic̃, Verc̃ic̃, & Sriramesh, 2012; Welch 2012). Men (2012), drawing on the work of Saks and Rotman, viewed employee engagement as employees “being psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. In this sense, engagement deals with how individuals occupy themselves while performing their jobs, and involves the active use of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors” (p. 171). Engaged workers are thought to be more motivated and satisfied with their work. Scholars link employee engagement to increased productivity and vigilance on the job. Some scholars view CSR as a form of organizational engagement. Engagement is viewed as organizations being transparent and open to public questions and scrutiny. CSR provides a context that allows for greater interaction between organizations and publics (Golob & Bartlett, 2007). For CSR scholars, engagement is essentially enacting corporate initiatives deemed beneficial to local stakeholders and publics. Engagement is linked with doing good deeds and interacting with the community (Wang & Chaudhri, 2009)

With the emergence of the Internet, particularly social networking sites, organizations are now able to directly initiate a two-way communications with their publics. In other words, social media has become a platform for organizations to engage with their public and vice-versa in virtually real time. Engagement has been utilized to measure the number of clicks, views, likes, tweets and the like. Many authors have used the concept of engagement to describe social media facilitated communication via Facebook or Twitter. Engagement is viewed as interactions with stakeholders and publics via social media (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Men & Tsai, 2013; Wigley & Lewis, 2012; Yang & Kang, 2009). Although all organizations will benefit from social media, nonprofits tend to benefit the most from this novice communication medium. By incorporating social media as part of the strategic communication process, the level of engagement among nonprofits and stakeholders will increase.

The concept of engagement has been widely used; however, the focus of research about this topic is primarily contextual rather than performance. Taylor and Kent (2014, p. 388) suggested: “The current public relations articles about engagement lack a clear conceptual statement about engagement as a public relations philosophy or activity.”

In addressing this issue, Kang (2010) proposed a definition adopted from prominent view of engagement with the affective aspects at the core of its definition and suggests:

Public engagement is defined as a psychologically motivated affective state that brings voluntary extra-role behaviors, and is characterized by affective commitment, positive affectivity and empowerment that an individual public experiences in interactions with an organization over time (p.11).

The concept of engagement is defined with three dimension proposed by Kang (2010, 2014): Affective commitment, positive affectivity and empowerment. According to Allen and Meyer (2001, p.68), affective commitment refers to “an affective or emotional attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and

enjoys membership in, the organization.” A person with strong affective commitment chooses to stay with an organization because they want to. It is different from continuance commitment which refers to “an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization” or normative commitment which reflects “a feeling of obligation” to remain with the organization. Steers and Porter (1991) conceptualized affective commitment as having the following characteristics: “1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization” (p. 226). Regarding the impact of affective commitment and engagement, a study about work engagement conducted by Schaufeli and Salanova (2007) found that when engagement levels increase, the level of organizational commitment increases as well. Moreover, affective commitment enhances one’s feeling of attachment and a sense of pride to an organization (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Mowday, Porter, & Steers 1982). On their scale of commitment, Meyer and Allen (1997) describe the affective aspect of commitment as “being part of the family” (p. 118). In Kang’s engagement conceptualization, she proposed affective commitment as the first aspect of engagement “characterized by emotional bonding and pride that brings additional efforts to sustain that relationship” (p. 402).

Positive affectivity (PA) is a dimension of affective structure that can be characterized as the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active and alert (Cropanzano et al., 1993; Watson et al., 1988). Researchers have found a direct link between PA and the experience of pleasant events, social activity, and attitudes involving awards (e.g., Finch, 1998, Shaw, Duffy, Jenkins & Gupta, 1999, Zautra, 1983; Zautra & Reich, 1983). Previous theory and evidence from the creative performance literature indicated that such positive affective experiences broaden peoples’ attentional focus (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Gasper, 2004; Gasper & Clore, 2002),

allowing them to access more diverse pieces of information from memory and to be more creative or to generate more novel ideas (Fredrickson, 2001; Isen, 1999). In relation with engagement, research has shown that PA is a dimension reflecting the level of pleasurable engagement with the environment (Watson, Clark & Carey, 1988). They also find the relationship between high PA and positive emotions, including enthusiasm, energetic, mental alertness, interest, joy, and determination (p. 347). Trait PA reflects a generalized sense of well-being and competence, and of effective interpersonal engagement. Measures of engagement state without tapping into the affective energetic state are not properly measuring the concept of the state engagement in whole (Macey & Schneider, 2008). In the public engagement scale, Kang proposed positive affectivity is a facet of engagement characterized by attention and energy (p. 402)

Empowerment is the third component in conceptualizing public engagement. Conger and Kanungo (1988) viewed empowerment as “a motivational state that is internal to individuals.” Empowerment has been linked to an extent body of research in management practice, organizational structures, leadership skills (eg., Lawler, Mohrman, & Benson, 2001, Kanter, 1979, 1983; McClelland, 1975). Research showed that more than 70% of organizations have implemented some form of empowerment for at least some part of their workforce (Lawler, Mohrman, & Benson, 2001). In an attempt to bridge science and practice issues when pursuing thinking and researching on employee engagement, Macey and Schneider (2008) has explicated the linkage between psychological empowerment and the engagement process. Base on Spreitzer’s (1995) conceptualization, they stated that psychological empowerment may be an antecedent to work engagement (Macey & Schneider 2008, p. 78). Researchers have also proposed that job satisfaction, commitment, and retention are outcomes of empowerment (e.g.,

Kraimer et al., 1999; Liden et al., 2000). In addition, studies also showed that psychological empowerment in particular leads to affective organizational commitment because “it assesses the fit between the demands of the work role and the individual’s needs and values” (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Spreitzer, 1995b). Finally, psychological empowerment is also associated with increased continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), as the loss of an empowering work arrangement may be viewed as the sacrifice of something valuable that is difficult to replace with another employer. Kang proposed empower as representative of a motivated facet of engagement (2014, p. 403).

2.5. The Measurement of Engagement

Besides definitional ambiguity, measurement method for engagement is also limited.

2.5.1. Antecedents of engagement

Trust has been recognized as an important component of relationship management in various disciplines including relationship marketing, interpersonal relationship, and organizational communication management (e.g. Egan, 2001; Ford et al., 1998; Gummesson, 1999; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rankin, 1998; Selnes, 1998). In the field of public relations, Ledingham identifies 11 dimensions of organizational-public relationships (trust, openness, credibility, emotion, intimacy, similarity, immediacy, agreement, accuracy, common interests, and relational history). Of these, trust is consistently identified as a key element of relationships in the previous literature. For example, Grunig and Hon (1999) list six elements or components of relationships: control mutuality, trust, commitment, satisfaction, exchange relationships and communal relationships. Bruning and Ledingham (2002) identified trust as one of five relationship variables that influenced evaluations of satisfaction: investment, commitment, trust, involvement and openness. According to a research on trust, reputation and accountability, Swift (2001) cited that,

“Engagement and dialogue are critical to this concept of trust” (p. 17). Research on customers also pointed that trust is positively associated with customer loyalty and positive word of mouth (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996). For the engagement model, Kang (2014) proved that trust has a direct link with enhanced engagement with the public.

Satisfaction addresses the degree to which one party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are fulfilled and strengthened (Hon & Grunig, 1999). According to a study of public engagement, Bortree’s (2011) indicated that greater involvement or engagement with an organization leads to more satisfactory relationships. For example, Hecht (1978) pointed out that relational satisfaction causes a favorable affective response to the reinforcement of positive expectations. The concept of satisfaction has been closely associated with engagement in the work place. Engagement in the workplace seeks to foster greater loyalty and job satisfaction (Men, 2012; Ruck & Welch, 2012; Tkalac Vercic, & Sriramesh, 2012; Welch, 2012). Base on the work of Saks and Rotman, Men (2012) viewed employee engagement as employees “being psychologically present when occupying and performing an organizational role. In this sense, engagement deals with how individuals occupy themselves while performing their jobs, and involves the active use of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors” (p. 171). Engaged workers are thought to be more motivated and satisfied with their work.

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between trust and satisfaction and public engagement?

Besides the direct link among trust and satisfactions as antecedents of public engagement, Kang has also proved that the impact of engagement also leads to supportive behavioral intention, including positive word of mouth (WOM) and loyalty.

2.5.2. Outcomes of engagement

WOM is a concept that has gathered a lot of attentions from scholars in sales, marketing, consumer research (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Trusov, Bucklin & Pauwels, 2009; Anderson, 1998) and more recently on social networking sites (Brown, Broderick & Lee, 2007; Jansen, Sobel & Chowdury, 2009). Given the importance of this concept, however, few studies have been done on understanding the influence of WOM. Anderson (1998) stated that “the antecedents of WOM have seldom received direct attention.” Since then, studies have found that positive customer satisfaction and commitment are directly correlated (e.g., Blodgett, Granbois, & Waiters 1993; Heckman & Guskey 1998; Brown, Barry, Dacin & Gunst, 2005). Gremler, Gwinner, and Brown (2001) examined the effects of customer-employee relationships on positive WOM and found that the interpersonal relationship between customers and a service provider that are marked by trust resulted in greater positive WOM behavior by customers.

Loyalty

Similar to WOM, the concept of loyalty has been vastly researched across different disciplines, prominently in marketing and customer service. Loyalty has a direct connection with trust in service provided to customers. Customer trust is a means to buy a product or service and that customer trust has a positive relationship with customer loyalty (Ribbink, Liljander & Streukens, 2004). Another concept that has a great influence over loyalty is satisfaction. Empirical evidences shows that when organizations give more importance to the expectations of its customers then it derives customer loyalty (Flint, Blocker & Boutin, 2011). The potential predictive power of engagement to loyalty outcomes has emerged, especially in marketing literature (Bowden, 2009; Patterson, Yu, & De Ruyter, 2006, Sprott, Czellar & Spangenberg, 2009). The relationship between loyalty and engagement is evident in organizational research

(Kang, 2014, p. 405). This study attempts to explore the essentiality of an affective notion of engagement on the formation of loyalty and positive WOM from members of an organization.

RQ2: Does public engagement significantly predict positive behavioral intention (Positive WOM and loyalty)?

Lastly, this research also seeks to understand the relationship among trust, satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions with public engagement serving as the mediator.

RQ3: To what extent does public engagement mediate trust and satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The best practice for conducting a survey suggests, first and foremost, having clear goals and objectives. A survey method should be thoroughly planned and executed according to the overall communication strategies (Stacks, 2010). The purpose of this study is to apply the concept of public engagement on the enhancement of the organization-public relationship.

According to Fowler (1993), a survey is administered to a specific population. The researcher has the option to conduct a census or to collect “information about every individual in a population” (p. 4).

The second component of a survey is question design. It can be classified as one of two types: closed or open. Closed questions include a list of acceptable answers from which the respondent must choose, while with open-ended questions the researcher does not provide a list of acceptable answers (Fowler, 1993). In her study of public engagement, Kang used short, closed-ended questions. This study replicates the same questions as Kang, modified only to refer to the study’s specific organization, the Muncie Symphony Orchestra.

The population for this study is the Muncie Symphony Orchestra publics, including employees, staff, musicians, donors, sponsors, seasonal ticket patrons and general patrons. The survey was sent out to the database of the Muncie Symphony Orchestra e-newsletter list, which comprised of more than 300 subscribers. This population was chosen to identify their relationship toward the organization.

Public engagement/relationship questions are represented as 13 Likert scale items

- I feel emotionally attached to this organization.
- I do feel like a part of the family with this organization.

- I do feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization.
- I am interested in this organization's activities.
- I am attentive to this organization's activities.
- I am excited about this organization.
- I am enthusiastic about this organization.
- I am proud of this organization.
- I believe I can make differences in what happens in this organization.
- I am determined to be involved for the development of this organization.
- I believe I have a great deal of control over the decision-making process of this organization.
- I am confident about my abilities to improve the organization.
- I believe I can collaborate with this organization as a valuable partner.
- Supportive behavior questions are represented as 8 Likert scale items.
- I would encourage friends to attend performances from this organization.
- I would encourage family members or relatives to attend performances from this organization.
- I would recommend this organization to someone who asked my advice.
- I would say positive things about this organization and its services to other people.
- I consider this organization is my first choice to attend performances.
- I will attend more performances from this organization in the next few years.
- I will continue to attend performances at this organization if its prices increase somewhat.
- I will continue to attend performances at this organization even if I experience a few problems with this organization's service.

- Trust and satisfaction questions are represented as 11 Likert scale items.
- This organization treats me as a patron fairly.
- Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about me as a patron.
- Sound principles seem to guide this organization's behavior.
- This organization does not mislead me as a patron.
- I feel very confident about this organization's service quality.
- This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.
- This organization is known to be successful at the things it tries to do.
- This organization is competent in fulfilling patrons' expectations.
- Generally speaking, I am very pleased with the relationship this organization has established with me as a patron.
- I am very satisfied with this organization.
- I am delighted with this organization.

Fowler (2002) explained the three basic principles of ethical issues in informing respondents, protecting respondents, and explaining the benefits to respondents. For data collection, I obtained approval from the Ball State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The results of my research were collected through an online survey via Qualtrics. To protect participant's identification, all responses were kept completely anonymous. The questionnaire did not ask for any specific personal identifying information about the participants, except for basic demographic information. All data will be deleted upon the completion of this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Among the 104 participants who completed the survey, 64 participants (62% were female).

Table 1: Research participants' gender (n=104)

	n	%
Male	40	38
Female	64	62

Regarding research participants age, the mode was the age range from 46 to 55 (n=13; 12.5%).

Frequency for other age ranges includes (Table 2): 25 and under (n=17; 16.3%); 26 to 35 (n=9; 8.6%); 36 to 45 (n=10; 9.6%); 56 and 64 (n=19; 18.3%); and 65 and Over (n=36; 34.7%).

Table 2: Research participants' age range (n=104)

	n	%
25 and Under	17	16.3
26-35	9	8.6
36-45	10	9.6
46-55	13	12.5
56-64	19	18.3
65 and Over	36	34.7

The majority of research participants were white (n= 96), which account for 92.3% of the participants. Frequency for other race/ethnicity categories includes (Table 3): African American (n=2; 2%); Asian (n=2; 2%); Hispanic/Latino (n=1; .1.04%); and Other (n=18; 2.6%). This result relatively reflects the current race/ethnicity of Muncie. According to the survey result conducted

by city-data.com, white people accounts for 82.7% of the population (n=57,940). Other races including African American (n=5,092;7.3%); Asian (n=2; 2%); Hispanic/Latino (n=1,613; 2.3%); and Other (n=416; 0.61%).

Table 3: Race/Ethnicity (n=104)

	n	%
African American	2	2
White	96	92.3
Asian	2	2
Hispanic/Latino	1	1.04
Native American	0	0
Bi-racial/Multi-racial	0	0
Other	3	2.6

In terms of educational level, research participants reported the mode of their education level as a Master’s degree (n=42; 40%). Frequency for other educational level categories includes (Table 4-4): High School or G.E.D. (n=22; 2.20%); Some College (n=98; 10%); 2-Year College Degree (n=116; 11.80%); 4-Year College Degree (n=274; 27.90%); Professional Degree (n=48; 4.90%); and Doctoral Degree (n=63; 6.4%).

Table 4: Education Level (n=105)

	n	%
Incomplete	0	0
High school or G.E.D	3	2.9

Some College	15	14.2
Associate Degree	3	2.9
BA/BS	15	14.2
MA/MS	42	40
JD	19	18.1
Ph.D.	3	2.9
Ed.D.	2	1.9
Other	3	2.9

Base on the household income level, the mode is the range from \$50,000 to \$74,999 (n=15; 15.2%). Frequency for other income level categories includes (Table 5): 0 to \$24,999 (n=14; 14.1%); \$25,000 to \$49,999 (n=16; 16.2%); \$75,000 to \$99,999 (n=20; 20.2%); \$100,000 to \$149,000 (n=17; 17.1%); \$150,000 to \$199,999 (n=7; 7.1%); and \$200,000 to Above (n=10; 10.1%).

Table 5: Annual household income level (n= 99)

	n	%
0-\$24,999	14	14.1
\$25,000-\$49,999	16	16.2
\$50,000-\$74,999	15	15.2
\$75,000-\$99,999	20	20.2
\$100,000-\$149,999	17	17.1
\$150,000-\$199,999	7	7.1

\$200,000 and above

10

10.1

Regarding the period of time donors or patrons have been involved with the MSO, the mode was Five Years or longer (n=16; 16.7%). Frequency for other duration categories includes (Table 6): Four Years (n=41; 42.6%); Three Years (n=11; 11.5%); Two Years (n=9; 11.5%); One Year (n=7; 7.3%); and Other (n=3; 3.1%).

Table 6: Duration as patron or donor (n=96)

	n	%
More than 10 years	41	42.6
5 years	16	16.7
4 years	11	11.5
3 years	9	9.4
2 years	9	9.4
1 year	7	7.3
Other	3	3.1

Lastly, about the relationship of participants with MSO, the mode was Single time patron (n=8; 6.0%). Frequency for other related categories include (Table 7): Current donor (n=42; 34.0%); Current long-term patron (n=27; 22.0%); Past donor (n=6; 5.0%); and Past patron (other than donor) (n=259; 23.90%).

Table 7: Type of relationship (n=104)

	n	%
As a current/continuing patron	42	34

As a current/continuing donor	27	22
As a single-time patron	8	6
As a past patron	14	11
As a past donor	6	5
MSO Musician	27	22
MSO staff	20	16
None of the above	3	2
Other: Please describe your relationship with the MSO	2	2

RQ1: Is there a significant relationship between trust and satisfaction and public engagement?

To address whether levels of public engagement could be predicted from levels of trust and satisfaction, a correlation was performed. The result was statistically significant, $r(84) = .545$, $p < .001$ which shows that there was a strong, positive correlation between trust and satisfaction and the concept of public engagement.

Measure	1
1. Trust and Satisfaction	--
2. Public Engagement	.545

Note: All coefficients are significant at $p < .001$

RQ2: Does public engagement significantly predict positive behavioral intentions (POM and loyalty)?

The other aspect of public engagement as outcome of positive behavioral intentions holds that the continuation of the organization-public relationship depends on the degree to which expectations are met. A correlation analysis was performed to assess this relationship and the result was also statistically significant, with $r(84) = .588, p < .001$, which shows that there was a strong, positive correlation between the concept of public engagement and positive behavioral intentions.

Measure	1
1. Support Behaviors	--
2. Public Engagement	.588

Note: All coefficients are significant at $p < .001$

RQ3: To what extent does public engagement mediate trust and satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions?

A one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between public engagement and the two concepts of trust and satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions. The analysis is statistically significant, $F(3,76) = 58.167, p < .001$, indicating that public engagement plays a mediator role for trust and satisfaction as antecedents and positive behavioral intentions as outcome of this relationship. The ANOVA results for age range, race, education level, income level and gender showed no significant differences by relationship type.

Source		<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>
Trust and Satisfaction	Between groups	3	81.4	27.142	58.167***
	Within group	76	35.5	.467	
	Total	79	116.9		

*** $p < .001$

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Discussion

Public relations practitioners and researchers are increasingly focused on the impact of engagement to facilitate active two-way communication and collaborations with their publics. The purpose of this study was to apply the public engagement scale to the audience of a local symphony orchestra to understand the effect of public engagement to public-organization relationship. The results of this study reveal that the scale proposed by Kang (2010, 2014) do apply to help understand the relationship between the Muncie Symphony Orchestra and its publics. This study found a statistically significant relationship between trust, satisfaction and the concept of public engagement. This concept is also a predictor of supportive behavioral intentions (i.e., loyalty and WOM). Most importantly, this research confirms Kang's findings of the significant mediator effects of public engagement between trust, satisfaction and supportive behavior intentions.

These findings indicate that supportive behavioral intentions are more likely to occur when there is a higher level of trust and satisfaction. In the context of the MSO, patrons with a sense of pride and excitement are more likely to attend more performances and tell their friends and family members about this organization than less satisfied patrons. They were also more willing to be involved in fundraising and other activities to support the organization.

5.2. Limitations

This research examines the relationship of public engagement toward trust and satisfaction and positive behavioral intentions. Due to the exploratory nature, this study does not come without limitations. The researcher measured only the subscribers of the MSO email list which may account for the positive effect of these relationships. Also, relationship research tends to change

over time. Therefore, a longitudinal study with a larger population would increase insights to these relationship dimensions and highlight the factors that predicts these relationships.

When interpreting the results for this study, the researcher acknowledges that MSO is a small organization that is affiliated with Ball State University, which will decrease its generalizability. Finally, this study uses a quantitative approach which will limit the in-depth understanding the public engagement concepts. Future studies should incorporate a qualitative approach to have a more thorough explanation of this phenomenon.

5.3. Implications

The result from this study shows that MSO can plan their public relations campaign to bring out affective elements from the interactions with their publics such as pride or shared values. The implication from this research will be categorized in online and off-line engagement.

Online engagement

Before social media, email was the form of online engagement that was heavily utilized by nonprofits to foster the relationship with their publics and keep them updated with the organization's events. According to my survey result, nearly 50% of all the participants mentioned that they receive announcements about MSO events via email. In fact, an email newsletter is a cost-effective tool to directly deliver messages to targeted individuals (Theaker, 2008). The MSO should consider having a customized email list for different audience categories to send emails on specific subjects. This method can easily be done by allowing subscribers to sign up to receive certain update categories such as classical music, education programs, and volunteer recruitment. In addition, the orchestra can develop their own email template and keep it consistent throughout a variety of platforms. By doing this, employees will have a guideline to follow and allow the organization to have a unique online image.

The emergence of social networking sites has granted nonprofit organizations an unprecedented opportunity to engage with their audience directly and in virtual real time. To utilize social media more effectively to engage with patrons and donors, the organization should consider integrating it as part of their strategic plan. It is important to make sure that these strategies are consistent through every platform, whether it is Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, to use it to the fullest advantage. In order to do so, the MSO staff is required to work within the brand identity across all platforms. Such an approach might include the use of colors, logos, and style of writing consistently across various forms of media. Adopting a brand message will not only allow employees to work under a general guideline but also to define the voice of the organization. In addition, consistency will help the organization to operate within the strategic framework. As a result, personal and inappropriate posts could be prevented and at the same time create more room for creativity.

During off-season when the orchestra does not have sufficient content to keep their social media platforms updated on a regular basis, networking with nonprofit partners is potentially beneficial. However, this strategy needs to be adopted with privacy and management concerns in mind. Besides, statistical and data analysis are also crucial to understand the audience in order to facilitate interactions. There are some built-in analytic functions provided by these social media sites that are worth examining regularly. In addition, the MSO also has the ability to effectively gather its own Facebook, Twitter, and overall Web 2.0 analytics that inform their future decision making through platforms like Simply Measured. All targeted approaches to social media use, such as donor cultivation, event announcements, and volunteer recruitment to new programs can be measured quickly and easily, including who and what type of posts result in the intended audience response. Understanding where different types of posts appear and which differing

media platforms (e.g., Facebook, blogging, Wikis, or Twitter) are most beneficial for an organization are both keys to improving two-way communication and facilitate engagement.

Off line engagement

As mention previously, the MSO has an advantage of being located on campus. This will allow them to have better access to engage with Ball State students and faculty members. Besides having posters and flyers of events and concerts sent out throughout campus, the orchestra can also facilitate more activities in order to facilitate interactions with their stakeholders. This research has pointed out the relationship between trust and satisfaction, with public engagement as a mediator that results in positive WOM and loyalty. One of the techniques to improve interaction with the public on a face-to-face basis or offline is via guerrilla marketing. It is defined as “unconventional advertisement campaigns which aim at drawing the attention of a large number of recipients to the advertising message at comparatively little costs by evoking a surprise effect and diffusion effect” (Hutter & Hoffmann, 2011). Even though this method is mainly used in marketing and advertising, public relations practitioners can adapt this technique to reduce cost and raise awareness for their campaigns. For instance, the orchestra can start a Flash Mob at Ball State dining halls to engage students to participate in this activity. Besides, the main idea of engagement is to facilitate two-way communications. At their concert, the orchestra staff can organize pre- or post-event activities to connect musicians and audiences. These are some of the tactics that will allow MSO to increase engagement with their stakeholders.

5.4. Proposed Public Relations Goals and Objectives

In order to understand the internal and external factors that affect the organization, prior to formulating the communication plan, a SWOT analysis and executive analysis were conducted.

Executive summary

Muncie Symphony Orchestra is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization in Muncie, Ind., that is dedicated to entertaining, educating, and enriching the East Central Indiana community through meaningful, professional musical experiences.

Founded in 1948, the orchestra was originally formed to build community connections through music while giving Ball State University faculty and students an outlet to pursue musical excellence in performance. Over the years, the orchestra has grown and evolved and now consists of approximately 70 musicians, including resident music faculty, professional freelance musicians from the tri-state area, and BSU students. MSO performs traditional classical programs as well as pop concerts, children's concerts, and community engagement events.

Vision

To be the leading fine arts organization presenting symphonic and other musical events within East Central Indiana, and engage in mutually beneficial partnerships leading to a more vibrant community.

Issues

After an initial meeting with MSO staff, the immediate concerns were lack of manpower, no existing niche and confusion of marketing to younger audiences. After this meeting, further quantitative and qualitative research was performed in order to establish other issues. The organization was examined internally and externally through MSO archives, interviews, and surveys. These procedures led to discovering MSO also needed help with internal communication and with changing the public's opinion and conversation about the definition of an orchestra.

Based on research and the needs expressed by MSO representatives, the following goals were created:

1. Enhance the engagement between MSO and potential customers and volunteers online.
2. Enhance the engagement between MSO and potential customers and volunteer's offline.

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Long history with the Muncie community
- Credible
- Deep connection with community members
- Perform on Ball State University campus
- Talented musicians
- Dedicated staff
- Have their own volunteer league
- Variety of shows offered

Weaknesses

- Full orchestra is expensive, have to pay for professionals
- Stereotype of what an orchestra is: outdated, old, stuffy, etc.
- Don't have a niche
- Borderline between education and entertainment
- Poor social media activity, disorganized website, and inconsistent blog
- Inconsistent media relations
- Lack of organization for events
- Lack of organization in the office

- Main public is “dying” (older)

Opportunities

- Increase and improve internal communication, specifically organization and collaboration
- Improve communication between Muncie Symphony Orchestra and Muncie Symphony League
- Utilize social media more to gain new/younger audiences and more awareness
- Form relationships with local media
- Personalize MSO events
- Develop and foster relationship with Ball State University students
- Educate the community on what an orchestra is and what it offers.
- More visibility of musicians in the community
- Form alliance with young professionals group in Muncie
- Reach out to local businesses to help communicate volunteer opportunities
- Develop opinion leaders to advocate and define a positive image for MSO

Threats

- Lack of awareness of Ball State University students
- Get confused with bands, most common “America’s Hometown Band”
- Must compete with orchestras in the surrounding area
 - American Hometown Band, Anderson Symphony Orchestra, Marion Philharmonic
 - Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Lafayette Symphony Orchestra, Richmond

- Symphony Orchestra, Fort Wayne Symphony Orchestra, Carmel Symphony Orchestra.
- Ball State Student Orchestra
- Must compete with numerous Ball State concerts (mostly more popular artists and music)
- Today's pop culture shifts attention to more current types of music
- Other entertainment options are/perceived as cheaper and more convenient
- Old fashion/out dated reputation causes younger publics to shy away from attending
- Culture of today more casual. Audiences seek formal experiences less often
- Limited funding
- Budget cuts continue to impact schools and programs
 - Students are growing up with less or without music education. Therefore, there are less people interested in music and the arts. Could be seen as the root of the issue

These analyses help identify MSO key publics and create achievable goals and relevant objectives and tactics.

Key Publics:

- Traditional Ball State on-campus students 18-24, Millennials
- Residents of the Muncie community, employed, 25-30, interested in music
- Current MSO supports and donors, primarily 65+, retired, and loyal supporters for decades (based on survey results)

Goal 1: Enhance the engagement between MSO and potential customers and volunteers online.

Objective 1: To increase engagement of MSO events and opportunities specifically for young adults ages 18-30 via social media.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with other local Facebook page to cross-sharing contents and events

Tactic 1: Like page and initiate relationship with admin of local non-profit organizations such as Downtown Muncie, Muncie Civic Theatre and so on.

Tactic 2: Share their content and events on MSO Facebook page that is relevant to the goal and objective of entertainment and education.

Tactic 3: Contact other pages and encourage them to share MSO contents and events that are relevant to their organization's goals and objectives.

Objective 2: To increase subscribers of MSO email newsletter by 20% over the next year

Strategy 1: To create customized email newsletters that suits different audience categories: Volunteer, BSU Student, Donor, and Current season ticket holders

Tactic 1: Create an online survey using Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey host to send out to the email list the MSO have compiled over the years with a request for online newsletter subscription and options.

Tactic 2: Send out another survey through the Ball State communication center email blast to reach a larger pool of students and faculty members.

Tactic 3: Create a questionnaire to send out to audience at concerts to direct to collect their email address and specific category of information they wish to receive.

Tactic 4: Create a customized email template that fits different category.

Goal 2: Enhance the engagement between MSO and potential customers and volunteer's offline.

Objective 1: To create acceptance among customers, donors, volunteers and community members specifically maximizing the desire to continually support and interact with MSO.

Strategy 1: Make MSO experience more personal.

Tactic 1: Have each musician speak to an attendee following the event.

Tactic 2: Have a group of musicians write personalized letters to customers once a month showing appreciation for attending events.

Tactic 3: Introduce classical music to audience including interesting facts about the composer, the story behind the piece, or historic context.

Tactic 4: Create personal audience member pieces on blog, highlighting why they choose to attend MSO events.

Objective 2: To generate action of Ball State students, specifically to attend 20% of free MSO events over the next year.

Strategy 1: Use Guerilla Marketing to gain Ball State students' attention.

Tactic 1: Organize and conduct a musician-led flash mob in the Atrium.

Tactic 2: Contact musicians to discuss possible dates and times.

Tactic 3: Choose a date based on availability.

Tactic 4: Seek University approval from Facilities Assignment Coordinator.

Tactic 5: Organize call to action at end of flash mob.

Tactic 6: Schedule practices before date of flash mob.

Tactic 7: Execute.

Strategy 2: Dedicate concert to Ball State students' choice of music.

Tactic 1: Survey students at Scramble Light.

Tactic 2: Create survey.

Tactic 3: Seek university approval from Facilities Assignment Coordinator

Tactic 4: Have two student assistants survey students at the Scramble Light from 11 a.m.-2p.m., Monday through Friday.

Tactic 5: Have one young musician play modern music while student assistants distribute surveys.

Objective 3: To gain 20% more volunteers for MSO events over the next year

Strategy 1: Contact Ball State student organizations to provide opportunities for volunteer hours.

Tactic 1: Utilize Greek Life partnership to fulfil necessary volunteer hour requirements for students.

Tactic 2: Meet with executives of student organizations to discuss possible volunteer opportunities for members.

Tactic 3: Form an agreement with Greek Life/student organizations to have at least 10 students volunteer per semester.

Strategy 2: Reach out to local businesses and get them to help in spreading the word of volunteering.

Tactic 1: Utilize social media to contact businesses and alert them of upcoming volunteer opportunities 1 month before the event.

Tactic 2: Print flyers for upcoming volunteer opportunities and distribute at local businesses.

Tactic 3: Publicize more about incentives for volunteers via social media and flyers.

Tactic 4: Create survey via online for employees of local businesses. Have call to action for interested volunteers at end of survey, providing them with further information if interested.

Tactic 5: Have business owners distribute survey to employees via online.

Plan Evaluation

Goal 1: Enhance the engagement between MSO and potential customers and volunteers online.

Objective 1: To increase engagement of MSO events and opportunities specifically for young adults ages 18-30 via social media.

- Monitor blog traffic through Google Analytics. Record number of Facebook fans, Twitter followers, Instagram followers, and YouTube views as well as interactions. .
- Assign sentiment to any comments or conversations via social media, i.e. positive or negative.
- Keep track of conversations via social media regarding interest in attending events, donating to the organization, or volunteering.
- Monitor media coverage; keep track of media pitched. Record requests for post-event reports, monitor social media for mentions or references of the event and track as needed. Track PR placements in radio and online using Google Alerts.
- Compare 2016 social media presence to past.

Objective 2: To increase subscribers of MSO email newsletter by 20% over the next year

- Record the number of subscribers at a starting point to compare with the number of subscribers a year from now.
- Conduct a readership survey (see appendix A) to evaluate the effectiveness of these newsletter and to make improvements where needed.

Goal 2: Enhance the engagement between MSO and potential customers and volunteer's offline.

Objective 1: To create acceptance among customers, donors, volunteers and community members specifically maximizing the desire to continually support and interact with MSO.

- Record list of customers whose letters were sent to along with the date sent and their responses.
- Monitor online and print discussions about classical music introductions, personal interactions following shows, personal letters, and blog pieces.
- Assign sentiments to what people are saying, i.e. do they have positive or negative feelings about the personal outreach.
- Track blog traffic through Google Analytics.
- Track online conversations through Google Alerts.
- Compare 2016 event attendance, number of donors and volunteers and compare to past.

Objective 2: To generate action of Ball State students, specifically to attend 20% of free MSO events over the next year.

- Record number of call to action flyers given to students following flash mob.
- Keep track of online and print conversations regarding flash mob, paying special attention to sentiment.

- Utilize Google Analytics to track online conversations.
- Record number of surveys filled out by students.
- Compare 2015 free concert events' attendance and compare to past.

Objective 3: To gain 20% more volunteers for MSO events over the next year.

- Record the number of volunteers after each event to keep track.
- Survey volunteers about how they know about MSO and why they decided to volunteer at MSO.
- Compare number of new volunteers to number of previous year.

CHAPTER 6: REVIEWS OF THE PROJECT

6.1. Margaret Cude - Graduate Recruitment Coordinator at the Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science at Binghamton University

- Brief discussion of evaluator's credentials (e.g., knowledge and experience of the subject area)

I, Margaret Cude, am a Graduate Recruitment Coordinator at the Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science at Binghamton University (NY). Prior to working, I was a graduate student at Ball State University with a major in Public Relations. My thesis and coursework have given me ample opportunity to study public relations from a theoretical and practical standpoint.

- Relationship to the student and subject matter

Having known Anh Kieu in my time at Ball State, I was more than happy to assist her with a review of her manuscript. Anh and I worked together to plan events for the Department of Journalism Graduate Community. I informed her of an assistantship in the Rinker Center when I vacated the position for another opportunity. She and I worked together professionally and in courses. Anh also met with me on several occasions to discuss her creative project, so I've been appraised of its development at various points along the way. I offered advice where possible in these conversations, and am very pleased to see those conversations contributed to this final product.

- Evaluation of the topic as appropriate for the creative endeavor

I am not aware of other similar projects that have been carried out. I thought Anh's project was unique and insightful. She identified a problem and she created a solution. The flow of Anh's

literature review set up the necessity for the project very well. It led into the conversation of her executed project and its results.

- Evaluation of the student's approach

I believe Anh should have included more justification for why a survey method was chosen over, say, focus groups. I have included this critique in my review of her manuscript. However, I do agree that a survey approach was the best approach for this type of study and on this scale. I think Anh did a great job of presenting the distribution information and of concisely presenting her findings in a meaningful way.

- Evaluation of the body of the project

- a. Quality

The paper is well written. The content is solid and the research is well incorporated into the narrative of the text. There are some issues of citation and formatting, but these were noted in my review of the document, which I returned to Anh.

- b. Depth of treatment

There were a few points where I asked Anh to elaborate in my review, but overall, I think that she provided a good depth of information. Not so nitty-gritty that it lost sight of the overarching goal, but also not so broad as to be without direction.

- c. Coverage

There were no areas I thought Anh left obviously untouched. To the best of my knowledge, she has produced a comprehensive study and report.

- Evaluation of the student's work as contributing to the field (e.g., body of knowledge)

She obviously has an intimate knowledge of the MSO, and I liked that you could see she wanted to provide overarching information about symphony orchestras while addressing this concern at the MSO. She acknowledges that the results are not broadly applicable, but they are a starting point, I think – a case study of sorts.

6.1. Kelly Kenny - Communication Coordinator at Ballotpedia

- Brief discussion of evaluator's credentials (e.g., knowledge and experience of the subject area)

My name is Kelly Kenny. Currently, I am working as a communication coordinator at Ballotpedia, an online political news encyclopedia. My main responsibilities are, but not limited to, creating and editing press releases, social media, newsletter and media outreach. Prior to this position, I was working as a media and event coordinator at Eyedart studio in Goshen, Indiana. Aside from my working experience, the course work from my Master of Public Relations program at Ball State has helped me to view the field from both the academic and practical perspectives.

- Relationship to the student and subject matter

Three years ago, I met Anh when we were both working as graduate assistants in the journalism department. Although we did not work together for long, I was able to become acquainted with Anh on both professional and personal levels.

- Evaluation of the topic as appropriate for the creative endeavor

As a communication coordinator, the topic of Anh's project is similar to what I do on a daily basis. I find ways to connect with people via different platforms including traditional media, social media, websites, and other medium. I found Anh's topic for her creative project is narrow

but at the same time, it is very applicable to other nonprofit organizations. I believe her topic is appropriate for the creative endeavor.

- Evaluation of the student's approach

I agree with Anh's approach to this subject matter. She understood the importance of trust, satisfaction, word of mouth and loyalty to an organization. Her proposal of the engagement scale to assess and improve those relationships is relevant and applicable.

- Evaluation of the body of the project

- a. Quality

Overall, this research paper was conducted with proper knowledge and skills. While her hypothetical solution is thorough and well explained, I noticed and informed her of some tense issues, pluralization and forgotten prepositions. As a person working in the profession, I can see how she will be able to use execute and expand the project to a higher degree.

- b. Depth of treatment

Anh has successfully incorporated both theory and practice that she has gained by applying it to a specific organization with its own problems. Not only did she managed to explain the theory framework but also proposed an execution plan and post plan evaluation. However, I would suggest Anh consider combining survey with other methods. She could follow up with focus groups or interviews to better understand the types of relationships that she mentioned in her paper.

- c. Coverage

From my standpoint, Anh's topic was sufficiently focused that she elaborated on all possible aspects of the project.

- Evaluation of the student's work as contributing to the field (e.g., body of knowledge)

Her project was tailored around the Muncie Symphony Orchestra; nevertheless, her utilization of the engagement scale could be applied to other organizations, especially to nonprofit organizations. From the perspective of a person working in the field, I think Anh managed her project well and left room for improvement.

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APPENDIX A: SURVEY

Q1. What is the nature of your relationship with Muncie Symphony Orchestra (MSO)? Please select all choices that apply.

- As a current/continuing patron
- As a single-time patron
- As a past patron
- As a past donor
- MSO Musician
- MSO staff
- None of the above
- Other: Please describe your relationship with the MSO

Q2. How long have you supported MSO as a patron or/and a donor?

- More than 10 years
- 5 years
- 4 years
- 3 years
- 2 years
- 1 year
- Other

Q3. Instruction: The purpose of the following questions is to assess your relationships with MSO. For each item, please select an option (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”) that best represents the extent to which you believe each item describes the MSO. Check only one answer per question.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

1. I feel emotionally attached to this organization.
2. I do feel like a part of the family with this organization.
3. I do feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization.
4. I am interested in this organization’s activities.
5. I am attentive to this organization’s activities.
6. I am excited about this organization.
7. I am enthusiastic about this organization.
8. I am proud of this organization.

9. I believe I can make differences in what happens in this organization.
10. I am determined to be involved for the development of this organization.
11. I believe I have a great deal of control over the decision-making process of this organization.
12. I am confident about my abilities to improve the organization.
13. I believe I can collaborate with this organization as a valuable partner.

Q4. Instruction: The purpose of the following questions is to assess your relationships with MSO. For each item, please select an option (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”) that best represents the extent to which you believe each item describes the MSO. Check only one answer per question.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

Item:

1. I would encourage friends to attend performances from this organization.
2. I would encourage family members or relatives to attend performances from this organization.
3. I would recommend this organization to someone who asked my advice.
4. I would say positive things about this organization and its services to other people.
5. I consider this organization is my first choice to attend performances.
6. I will attend more performances from this organization in the next few years.
7. I will continue to attend performances at this organization if its prices increase somewhat.
8. I will continue to attend performances at this organization even if I experience a few problems with this organization’s service.

Q5. Instruction: The purpose of the following questions is to assess your relationships with MSO. For each item, please select an option (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”) that best represents the extent to which you believe each item describes the MSO. Check only one answer per question.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

Item:

1. This organization treats me as a patron fairly.
2. Whenever this organization makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about me as a patron.
3. Sound principles seem to guide this organization's behavior.
4. This organization does not mislead me as a patron.
5. I feel very confident about this organization's service quality.
6. This organization has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.
7. This organization is known to be successful at the things it tries to do.
8. This organization is competent in fulfilling patrons' expectations.
9. Generally speaking, I am very pleased with the relationship this organization has established with me as a patron.
10. I am very satisfied with this organization.
11. I am delighted with this organization.

Q6. Instruction: The purpose of the following questions is to assess your relationships with MSO. For each item, please select an option (“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”) that best represents the extent to which you believe each item describes the MSO. Check only one answer per question.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat disagree
- 4 = Neutral
- 5 = Somewhat agree
- 6 = Agree
- 7 = Strongly agree

Item:

1. This organization reflects my personal values.
2. I can identify with this organization.
3. I feel a personal connection to this organization.
4. I (can) use this organization to communicate who I am to other people.
5. I think this organization (could) help(s) me become the type of person I want to be.
6. This organization suits me well.

Q7. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q8. What age range applies to you?

- 25 and under
- 26 to 35
- 36 to 45
- 46 to 55
- 56 and 64

- 65 and over

Q9. Which of the following terms do you use to classify your racial identity?

- African American
- White
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native American
- Bi-racial/Multi-racial
- Other

Q10. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Incomplete
- High school or G.E.D
- Some College
- Associate Degree
- BA/BS
- MA/MS
- JD
- Ph.D
- Ed.D
- Other

Q11. What is your household income level?

- 0-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000-\$199,999
- \$200,000 and above

Q12. What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married
- Widowed
- Other

Q13. How many children do you have?

- None

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 or more

Q14. Which form of media do you use most often to get information for recreational/entertainment activities? Please check all that apply.

- Television
- Radio
- Newspaper
- Magazine
- Internet
- Direct mail
- Promotional e-mail
- Electronic newsletter
- Company website
- Word-of-mouth from friends and family
- Social media (Twitter, Facebook, blog, etc.)
- Street advertisement (billboard, poster, etc.)
- Mobile Devices (Smartphone, tablet, ect.)
- Other (please specify)

Q15. If you have any further suggestion to enhance patrons' engagement with MSO, please let us know your opinion.

This is the end of the survey. Thanks for your participation. To exit the survey, please click "Done".

APPENDIX B: CONSENT DOCUMENT

My name is Anh Kieu. I am a graduate student in the Department of Journalism at Ball State. I invite you to participate in a short research study about the Muncie Symphony Orchestra.

Purpose and Rationale

This research uses the concept of public engagement as a focal point. With your participation, I hope to apply the concept of public engagement to the enhancement of a Public- Organization relationship.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

To participate, you should be a customer, member, staff member, musician or volunteer of the Muncie Symphony Orchestra who is at least 18 years old.

Participation Procedures and Duration

You will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire about your opinions and experiences with the symphony. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minute of your time.

Data Anonymity

All data pertaining to your participation in this research will remain anonymous. No other data will have your name or personally identifiable information attached to it. Your participation will be made anonymous in presentations and publications.

Data Storage

All data collected will be stored in a password-protected computer.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. The information you provide will help the organization improve its relationship with patrons.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw your participation at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the researcher. Feel free to ask the researcher any questions you have regarding your participation in the study.

If you have any questions, please contact Anh Kieu, who is the student investigator for this study. You can contact her at ankieu@bsu.edu or 765-212-5430. You can also contact her academic advisor, Professor Michael Hanley at mhanley@bsu.edu or 765-285-8213. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, 765-285-5070 or irb@bsu.edu. Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation and participation.

PLEASE CLICK “NEXT” BELOW TO START