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MISSION-DRIVEN COMMUNICATION
FOR THE NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE DOWNTOWN
SPOKANE PARTNERSHIP

A Thesis

Presented To

Eastern Washington University

Cheney, Washington

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree

Master of Science in Communication

By

Lindsey Pilar Klemmer

Spring 2016

Thesis of Lindsey Pilar Klemmer

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Date

MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The development, content, and application of mission statements have been highly researched, studied, and discussed in generic terms. This case study was designed to develop and expand understanding of the mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership, rather than to generalize beyond it. Mission-focused questions were included in a communication audit conducted for Downtown Spokane Partnership [DSP], a non-profit organization [NPO] that advocates for the development of the downtown Spokane area. The study investigated perceptual differences and similarities of the DSP mission expressed by downtown business owners and DSP constituents compared to those expressed by DSP's staff and board members. The results showed that the perceptions were congruent between most constituents, but there was inconsistency in the way those inside and outside the organization understood their roles in fulfilling the mission. After identifying areas of strength and opportunities for growth, these findings were presented to Downtown Spokane Partnership to increase mission-understanding and fulfillment congruency among Employees, Board Members, and external constituents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	iv
List of Tables	vii
Chapter One: Introduction	
Downtown Spokane Partnership	3
Purpose of Study	7
Research Questions	8
Chapter Two: Review of Literature	
The Mission Statement	9
Components of a Mission Statement	10
Reasons for Development	11
Strategic Ambiguity	13
Organizational Ethos and Credibility	15
Organizational Sociology	17
Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO)	18
New Institutional Theory	19
Organizational Communication	21
Mission-Driven Non-Profit Organizations	23
Reframing Organizations	26
Summary	29
Chapter Three: Methodology	
Research Questions	31
Research Design	31
Initial Communication Audit Approach	32
Communication Audit to Case Study	35
Data Gathering Plan	36
Data Analysis Plan	37
Limitations	37
Chapter Four: Results and Discussion	
Mission	39
Surveys	39

DSP Employees	39
DSP & BID Board Members	43
DSP Members & BID Ratepayers	46
Interviews	49
Interview with DSP Leadership	49
Interview with DSP & BID Board Members	50
Chapter Five: Conclusion	
Suggestions and Implications for Future Research	54
Internal Communication	54
External Communication	54
Mission-Focused	55
References	
Appendices	
Appendix A: Consent Form	62
Appendix B: Intro Letters to Participants	63
Appendix C: Interview Script – DSP Leadership	65
Appendix D: Survey Questions – Clean Team, Ambassadors, Leadership Team	67
Appendix E: Survey Questions – Board Members	68
Appendix F: Survey Questions – DSP Members & BID Ratepayers	70
Appendix G: Eastern Washington University IRB Approval	73

Vita

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Q 50. Extent to which you think about or refer to the mission statement while making daily decisions.	40
Table 4.2: Q 52. Extent to which you feel you understand the mission of DSP.	41

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Organizational development and best practices are frequently researched and discussed topics among organizational scholars. Having started work at the age of thirteen in local event concessions, moving on to a locally owned and operated gun and toy store, then to a franchise before hiring on at an international corporation, I quickly became aware of the concept and practice of different business models. I've also worked for years, on a mostly seasonal basis, with a community non-profit, serving as secretary on the board of directors and communication specialist for Fairwood Farmers' Market. My work experience, in combination with my education through to graduate school, has led me to question the differences between the various types of organizations. Specifically, I wondered why I could not recall any mission statement from the organizations I worked for. Are there different mission statement criteria for different types of organizations? For what purpose do organizations create mission statements? Do they rely on them? Do they reference them? Do they edit and refine as necessary, or are these statements filled with strategic ambiguity for the purposes of hanging on the wall for long periods of time? Is the mission statement important to leadership only, or does it matter to employees on the front line and the people organizations are meant to serve? What makes a mission statement effective in a communication sense?

A quick summary of previous research (more extensively covered in the literature review) reveals that many of my early questions are also being asked for specific cases and for specific types of organizations. Previous studies have also investigated whether an organization's mission statement is aligned with communication practices, testing whether internal and external communication aligns with the mission statement. Other

studies have examined “congruency” or agreement on perceptions of mission statements within an organization and between internal and external stakeholders. Some research studies examine whether stakeholders within an organization are aware of the mission and whether their tasks and duties are aligned to fulfill that mission. Researchers have also asked if internal and external stakeholders are able to identify the central principles of an organization’s mission statement based on their observations of the organization’s work.

Previous research on the “efficacy” of mission statements revealed that many mission statements were superficial and lack application in practice, while others were a foundational pillar that was central to an organization’s success. Many recent studies seek to clarify the criteria that lead to effective, practical mission statements (Pearce & David, 1987; David & David, 2003; David, David, & David, 2014; Srinivasan, 2014).

The process of developing mission statements also differs from organization to organization. Some organizations hire experts to develop business statements for them, while others hire a consultant to coach them through the process. Still others refine and develop their mission statement through the growth of the organization. Organizations also use their mission statements in a variety of ways, some displayed publicly, some found only on office walls. In the 21st century, many organizations feature mission statements in their online communications, acknowledging that consumers and stakeholders may inquire about mission and values directly from a web site.

In general, this research is focused on the relationship between organizational communication and the mission statement. Specifically, it is designed as a case study

focused on the role and efficacy of the existing mission statement of one Spokane-based non-profit organization.

DOWNTOWN SPOKANE PARTNERSHIP

Downtown Spokane Partnership [DSP] is a non-profit organization that serves a large community, impacting many constituents. My interest in the DSP first began when EWU Communication Professor Jeff Stafford recruited me to assist with a strategic planning retreat in the summer of 2015. Many of the DSP Board Members and staff participated in this retreat and identified several communication issues they hoped to address in future meetings.

Additionally, a graduate course in Public Scholarship in the spring of 2015 introduced the philosophy and practice of community-based research at the graduate level, notably research that evolves out of collaboration with a non-profit organization with expressed research needs. As a class, we adapted the public scholarship definition proposed in 2003 by the University of Minnesota (and archived by several other universities online): “At the level of the institution, public scholarship means optimizing the extent to which University research informs and is informed by the public good, maximizes the generation and transfer of knowledge and technology, educates the public about what research the University does, and listens to the public about what research needs to be done” (“Public Scholarship,” p.2).

The DSP retreat, where the organization identified specific communication research needs, combined with the philosophy of Public Scholarship and my long interest in mission statements, together presented a serendipitous opportunity that led to the focus

for this research. By the winter quarter of 2016, the DSP partnered with a graduate course-based audit team from Eastern Washington University to conduct a communication audit for their organization. I enrolled in that course and served as project manager for the audit. I also incorporated questions about mission statement congruence into the instruments we adapted for surveys and interviews with DSP internal and external stakeholders. The EWU Institutional Review Board [IRB] approved my use of mission statement questions from the “archived data” gathered through the communication audit [See Appendix G]. The data collected and analyzed regarding these particular mission statement questions serves as the basis for this case study and, following the defense of this research, will be disseminated back to the DSP in the interests of public scholarship.

While selecting the DSP for this study was clearly a practical matter, given the partnership they established with the audit course in the winter quarter, the unique nature of the DSP as an organization cannot be overstated. Their web-based “About” page links to a detailed description of the organization, their importance to the community, and their strategic initiatives:

The organization

The DSP is a non-profit membership organization established in 1995 to ensure the urban core remains a healthy regional center of business, retail trade, government, education, transportation, and living. The DSP is Spokane’s central city advocate and service provider for the downtown Business Improvement District.

Recognizing that downtown revitalization benefits everyone living in the Spokane region, the DSP brings together those organizations committed to invigorating downtown Spokane’s economic, physical, and social environment. Membership is open to any and all individuals, partnerships, firms, corporations, and businesses interested in the welfare and development of downtown Spokane.

Today, more than 75 community-wide organizations fund a strategic agenda through membership in the DSP. Member organizations have the option of enrolling at a level of their choosing with a minimum annual contribution of \$525 ranging to \$10,500 or more.

Importance to the community

The DSP's activities are critical to the economic health of the entire community...from creating jobs, to improving the quality of life, to raising the value of downtown property. Whether it is a firm, an employee-recruit considering a position in Spokane, or a new family to the area, their opinion of Spokane as a suitable place to locate their business or move their family is largely formed by the appeal of the downtown area. A vital downtown, as the center for commerce, entertainment and cultural activities plays an important role in the community's ability to attract - and retain - people and investment.

Strategic Initiatives

The DSP actively pursues five strategic initiatives in collaboration with its partners and the community:

1. An Enhanced Public Services strategy to maintain and promote a clean, safe and accessible downtown (through the Business Improvement District).
2. A Public Policy strategy to encourage the adoption of governmental tools, guidelines and incentives to support the realization of downtown's full potential.
3. A Planning and Design strategy to create a beautiful, pedestrian-oriented urban environment maximizing the unique appeal of a downtown offering employment, culture, entertainment and natural assets.
4. A Business Development strategy to help generate jobs and economic vitality by anticipating the ongoing and rapid changes in the location, type and requirements of new commercial activity.
5. A Project Development strategy to aggressively advocate for necessary projects by securing public and private funding, ownership and partnership ("Organization," n.d., para. 1-5).

DSP describes itself as a "private, non-profit membership organization that serves as Spokane's central city advocate and service provider, dedicated to enhancing the quality and vitality of Downtown Spokane as the basis for a healthy region" ("Downtown," n.d., para. 3). The mission statement of the DSP proclaims the organization's dedication "to the creation of a dynamic, safe, vital, livable and

sustainable Downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region” (“Downtown,” n.d., para. 1). Importantly, the DSP claims to accomplish its mission by “advocating for public policies, business and project development, quality planning, physical improvement projects, public safety, beautification, and marketing programs that ensure downtown's continued success” (“Downtown,” n.d., para. 3).

These are lofty goals requiring a complex organizational structure. The DSP staff is comprised of three parts: Leadership, Ambassadors, and Clean Team. Leadership consists of positions such as the president, finance and database manager, public policy and parking manager, and marketing and programming manager. Ambassadors duties include creating the safe atmosphere by walking the streets of downtown; aiding in directions, employee escorts, and medical emergencies. Clean Team is responsible for improving and maintaining downtown Spokane’s aesthetic and cleanliness, including graffiti removal, filling garbage bags, removing ice and snow in the winter, and planting flowers.

Additionally, the City of Spokane hires the DSP to administer the Business Improvement District [BID], an area of approximately 80 blocks of the city’s Central Business District including more than 850 businesses and 350 property owners. The DSP & BID Boards together determine the duties and priorities for DSP staff to carry out. The BID’s Board positions are designated by location, business, and property type to ensure the business district's interests are represented and served. The DSP Board is an opt-in board that is made up of Ratepayers in the Downtown Spokane area. Ratepayers are businesses within a designated area that pays dues based on the square footage they occupy. The BID focuses on key services identified by Ratepayers: cleanliness, safety,

promotion, and parking. The DSP Board meets to discuss budget, management, and program delivery issues on behalf of the DSP membership, setting policies and strategic direction to build a more vital downtown. Members of the DSP elect to pay annual dues to fund the strategic agenda and position DSP as the downtown advocacy group.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to look into the relationship between communication and mission statements by analyzing the DSP and their stakeholder perceptions, including an investigation into how their practices align with the mission statement. Through a review of the literature on mission statements, organizational sociology and communication, and non-profit organizational communication, augmented by a case study of the DSP, this research seeks to measure communication congruency, the use of mission statements, and perceptions of DSP. The participants in this study include the DSP Staff (Leadership, Ambassadors, and Clean Team), members of the DSP Board, members of the BID Board, various Ratepayers, and key community constituents. The larger communication audit was designed to look deeper into communication internally and externally to identify the strengths as well as identify areas of discrepancy in the current communication tactics; however, this research is focused on the DSP's mission and its relationship to communication practices and stakeholder perceptions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ 1. In what ways can DSP strengthen the alignment between perceptions of the mission statement and communication practices?

RQ 2. What is the level of congruency between communication practices and the mission statement?

RQ 3. How do the perceptions of downtown business owners, DSP staff, and DSP constituents align with DSP's own perceptions and mission statement?

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The current conversation pertaining to this thesis spans three overlapping topics: the mission statement, organizational sociology, and mission statements and the non-profit organization. This review of the literature lays the foundation to understand each of the three topics individually before advancing an argument about the relationship between them. This literature review attempts to establish the scholarly beginnings and current trends for each topic and discover opportunities for advancing research that combines all three.

"If you don't know where you're going, it doesn't matter which way you go."

— Cheshire Cat, *Alice in Wonderland*

THE MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is often understood as the organization's reason for existing. As the quote above suggests, mission statements also serve to influence the direction of the organization. The literature reviewed for this study included case studies relating to higher education mission statements (Davis, Ruhe, Lee, & Rajadhyaksha, 2007; Camelia & Marius, 2013), studies on family businesses (Carmon, 2013), and articles analyzing the mission statements of larger corporations (Pearce & David, 1987; Bartkus & Glassman,

2008; Anderson & Jamison, 2015). This research was necessary to identify the areas of interest for the researcher and the areas that had sufficient research.

Additional research into mission statements includes articles that define the mission statement as a genre or make recommendations for its content, articles that provide a theoretical basis for expecting an effective mission statement to be associated with successful performance, and articles that identify outcomes for those organizations that thoroughly incorporate their visions and values within their mission statements. The mission section of the literature review was organized by components of a mission statement, reasons for development, strategic ambiguity, and ethics.

Components of a Mission Statement

Content analysis helps to identify components of mission statements and calculates the frequencies with which these components appear. With this in mind, mission statements should be inspiring, enduring, concise, clear, and conducive to both employees and customers to form an emotional bond with the firm (David, David, & David, 2014). Specifically, research suggests that a mission statement is most effective when it is approximately one hundred words in length, and when it avoids inclusion of monetary amounts, numbers, percentages, ratios, or objectives (David & David, 2003). Mission statement research has been impacted by the inclination of most researchers to formulate new components of measurement rather than using components already created for further use. Although various components with a range of labels have been suggested, most researchers found in this literature adopted a particular list of components to use for their research from the study by Pearce and David (1987) to provide some comparability

between mission statements. Pearce and David (1987) identified eight components that should be included in mission statements: 1. specification of target customers and markets; 2. identification of principal products/services; 3. specification of a geographical region; 4. identification of core technologies; 5. expression of commitment to survival, growth, and profits; 6. specification of key elements of company philosophy; 7. identification of company self-concept; 8. identification of firm's desired public image. If the components of mission statements are not comparable between similar or different organizations due to differing instruments used, how can their effectiveness really be measured? This is a common question that surfaces in mission statement research which sometimes confounds the validity of the research and findings.

The components found in a mission statement are often driven by the reason the organization seeks to develop a mission statement. An effective mission statement is developed through a detailed process and enables stakeholders to act and encourages an alignment of goals, values, and policies (Srinivasan, 2014). The reasons for development may be similar, as all organizations are trying to achieve success within their organization by carrying out their mission, but organizations also develop a mission statement for other organizational purposes.

Reasons for Development

Organizations develop a mission statement for a number of reasons. The goal of a mission statement is to positively influence behavior and to achieve consistency and focus throughout the business decisions (Bart, 1997). Mission statements are important to provide a sense of direction and purpose, appeal to the values of stakeholders, and

sharpen a business's focus (Bart, 2001). Strategic management articles have emphasized the mission statement because of its potential ability to direct organizations to effective organizational performance.

Although many research studies have looked for a positive correlation between having a mission statement and organizational performance, much of the research on this topic has questioned whether content correlates with performance (Dermol, 2012; Rajasekar, 2013). Other research has suggested that the mission statement should be unique to an organization and a source of competitive advantage to differentiate the organization from others (Srinivasan, 2014). Marketing planning is used to change the marketing mix in a way that allows the firm to continually adapt to changing consumer preferences and competitive conditions. Mission statements can be helpful in this process. Customers are "on a mission" to use and promote products or services that are consistent with their "emotional bond" with the company (David, David, & David, 2014). A mission statement that is written from the customer perspective could potentially help create or reinforce this bond (David, David, & David, 2014).

Developing and communicating an effective mission statement can assist an organization in gaining and maintaining competitive advantages over similar businesses. Organizations succeed by attracting and keeping customers, and they do this by providing better value for customers than that provided by their competitors (David, David, & David, 2014). A common marketing strategy used is to continually assess customers' changing needs and wants and make adjustments in the design and delivery of products and services to sustain competitive advantage. By applying this same strategy of

assessment to mission statements, organizations could hold a competitive advantage over similar organizations.

A mission statement should reveal the reason an organization is operating, the reason the employees go to work every day, and the reason customers return and buy products. The statement ideally synthesizes the passion behind the organization, the foundation for employee morale, and the basis for customer loyalty. If written from a customer perspective and included in both oral and written communication with customers, the statement could attract and comfort customers and thus enable marketers to help the firm gain competitive advantage (David, David, & David, 2014; Srinivasan, 2014). Mission statements are not just words that look nice framed or engraved, but theoretically should provide a basis for marketing strategy and action (David, David, & David, 2014). When the mission statement does not include the recommended components such as the need to be inspiring, enduring, concise, clear, and conducive to both employees and customers (David, David, & David, 2014), it may be filled with strategic ambiguity. This can lead to ineffective mission statements that are not being fulfilled.

Strategic Ambiguity

Language used in the development of mission statements is interpreted by customers, employees, and other stakeholders. Mission statements often contain strategic ambiguity for multiple reasons. Strategic ambiguity is the art of making claims by using language that avoids specifics (Paul & Strbiak, 1997; Carmon, 2013). It is “appropriate for addressing difficult issues, improving interpersonal relations, and resolving conflicts

that arise between individuals in organizations” (Paul & Strbiack, 1997, p. 149). Another use of strategic ambiguity is allowing the organization to work out issues situationally. Strategic ambiguity may be used by organizations to purposefully be vague to achieve their goals. “Family businesses are likely to use strategic ambiguity in their mission statements to allow for multiple interpretations of the same message by their stakeholders” (Carmon, 2013, pg. 1).

All organizations are likely to use strategic ambiguity for their own purposes, but some take advantage of ambiguity more than others. Most mission statements are not clear to managers, customers, and other stakeholders (Bart, 1997). This lack of clarity could be the result of strategic ambiguity. Because of the use of strategic ambiguity, people do not believe in mission statements, they are unoriginal, and they are not motivating (Srinivasan, 2014).

“No doubt the vision statement is important, but an effective process ensures superior understanding of the organization’s vision (not just remembering the statement), enables commitment for action, and emphasizes the alignment across various statements of the organization’s intent or purpose—its mission, goals, values, and policies.” (Srinivasan, 2014, p. 34)

If strategic ambiguity is used, the mission and vision of where the organization is going will not be understood and therefore not carried out. If the mission statement should be the first tool that is developed with similar business forms following, where do the ethical standards and tools to handle conflicts come in? The use of strategic ambiguity

could have ethical implications as well as an impact of the mission not being understood.

Organizational Ethos and Credibility

Ethos, or the reputation of an organization, is not exclusively relevant for corporate discourse, but it relies on the audience's cooperation in meaning-making and establishing the organization's credibility. Organizational scandals suggest that an organization's actions are not always aligned with the promises made in mission statements (Bartkus & Glassman, 2008). Skilled corporate communicators have the power of words and other rhetorical strategies in mind when attempting to create the mission statements, but these strategies must be carefully chosen based on a clear assessment of all parts of the rhetorical situation. The characteristics of the audience, the purpose for the communication, and the specific context or environment should all be taken into account when developing a company's mission statement to represent their visions and values (Jung, 2011).

Adapting a mission statement to the above characteristics can be difficult to do, especially for an organization like Wal-Mart where their customer cliental is very different from the business owners that they work with to put their products on the shelves. Wal-Mart's mission statement is "We save people money so they can live better" (Wal-Mart, n.d.). At the same time, Wal-Mart may know that their customers have the lowest price as their highest priority and that can only be delivered through unethical environments on the manufactures behalf (Sethi, 2013). They are saving their customers money so that they can live better, but at what cost?

Ethical scandals in recent years have heightened the public's concerns about corporate honesty and ethics. Therefore, a corporation can strengthen its ethos by stating in its mission statement that it values integrity and honors ethical standards on a daily basis (Williams, 2008). Companies like Starbucks make sure that they are participating in the community and making decisions that impact the community in a positive way. Starbucks's mission statement is "to inspire and nurture the human spirit – one person, one cup and one neighborhood at a time." (Starbucks, n.d.) Their values are then listed underneath, stating the importance of the community on the company's website. Starbucks is known for making decisions with the community in mind. Starbucks shows their community focus by requiring their employees to volunteer within the community and make a positive impact. There are critics of Starbucks that do not agree that the mission is being applied to their employees. Starbucks has been criticized for exploiting their employees by only allowing them to work part-time, with little to no overtime. Requiring their employees to volunteer on top of limited paid hours exacerbates this claim of exploitation. Zappos' mission is "provide the absolute best service online" (Zappos, n.d.). Company staff works toward this goal every day, and customers experience it via free and easy returns on their shoe orders. Zappos has aligned all business decisions with their customers in mind; in return, their business success is testimony of achievement of their mission. Mission statements can be a valuable tool to organizations if they are used appropriately. Furthermore, it seems an organization's attitude reflected in its mission statement is partially dependent on the owners and managers' attitude of the mission statement and its importance.

Likewise, if knowledge of the mission statement is required and promoted by the organization's management system, then all employees would see the mission statement as a tool for their own decision making. An organization that sees their mission statement as a way to check all decisions and how they compare to the organization's visions and values would theoretically be more successful, as the essence of the organization is embedded in all actions, by all employees. However, this critical concept of mission statements serving as the driving force for all business practices is often reinforced only at an administrative level. Whitbred and Gumm (2004) found employees who were involved higher up in companies were more aware of the organization's values than the employees at the lower end. Mission statements and the organization's values are not always well promoted and therefore the employees are unaware of the organization's expectations. If mission statements are an important means of communication, because the mission statement is a tool of communication for internal and external constituents, (King, Case, & Premo, 2014) then the mission statement is one important piece that fits in the larger organizational communication.

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

After assessing mission statements as a communication artifact and tool for organizations, the next area of existing research needed to inform an understanding of mission statements and how they work in organizations was "organizational sociology." It seems there is no singular academic field that completely incorporates organizational sociology which is organizational sociology is interdisciplinary in scope. Researchers have compared how organizational sociology fits into the larger field of sociology in social sciences and organizational studies (Scott, 2004; Augier, March, & Sullivan,

2005). “The influences go in both directions, and it is often not possible to distinguish developments in the more circumscribed area of organizational sociology from those in the wider field” (Scott, 2004, p. 1). Because of the nature of mutual influence, it makes sense to study organization sociology as it encompasses both organizational communication and social studies. “In business schools, sociologists quickly expanded their agenda to include ‘organization theory’ (emphasizing the study of organizations rather than individual behavior within organizations) and now are active in programs as varied as management, organization strategy, human resources, and entrepreneurship” (Scott, 2004, p. 16). Organizational sociology helps to bridge communication and the mission of an organization. Having studied organization theories and perspectives that view organizations as social constructs, the expansion into organizational sociology synthesizes the two fields and allows for a deeper understanding of how they work together to explain the impact of mission statements on the organization.

Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO)

“CCO [communicative constitution of organizations] theory addresses how organizations emerge from, and are constituted in, the practices of all organizational members and texts” (Kopaneva & Sias, 2015, p. 360). Communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) claims that organizations originate and exist through communication. This theory suggests that those in leadership positions should not be the only voice in the creation and conversations surrounding the mission statement; all employee voices should be incorporated as well. Employees who are involved at higher levels within the organization tend to be more aware of the organization’s values than the employees at the lower levels (Whitbred & Gumm, 2004). The opinions and views of

organizational leadership differ from those of most employees they supervise. The CCO theory helps to explain these organizational differences of perception and offers a solution. “Because of differences in worldviews, co-orientation becomes particularly important. Co-orientation is a process through which communities of practice build a relationship” (Kopaneva & Sias, 2015, p. 365). The integration of communication between leadership and employees regarding the mission creates the most efficient and effective fulfillment of the mission when there is a direct strategy in place to be mission-focused.

New Institutional Theory

Stanford Sociologist W. Richard Scott has long studied organizations and reminds us that sociologists “have been leading contributors to our understanding of organizations in modern society, and organizations remain one of the most influential actors of our time” (Scott, 2004, p. 17). The identity, duties, and dynamics of organizations have changed and developed over the span of many years. New institutional theory attempts to track and frame organizational changes in response to cultural pressures. “New institutional theory (NIT) arose within sociology during the late 1970s and early 1980s in response to the advent of post-industrialism in the US. Manufacturing firms had long been the paradigmatic ‘organizations’ in organization theory” (Davis, 2010, p. 303). The focus became less about the efficiency and effectiveness of the organizations and more about the evaluation of actions of the organization and how they fit within a socially constructed system of norms (Davis, 2010). This caused organizations to create and fit in a standard over time so that evaluations could be comparable.

“Gradually the idea was accepted that there are generic types of social structures—organizations—to be administered under a common body of knowledge—management—and containing recognized subcategories (firms, schools, agencies). The emergence of organization studies, which provide a scientific account of these phenomena, has served to underscore and advance this professional project” (Scott, 2014, p. 7).

In alignment with the social constructionist approach, UK scholars Mutch, Delbreidge, and Ventresca (2006) claim that the “new institutionalist approach” focuses on

“the concern to draw such connections, to recognize that organizations do not somehow float in a neutral ‘environment’ but that their actions produce and reproduce the world that they inhabit, has been behind the use of terms such as ‘organizational field’ by some within new institutionalist approaches”

This is an example of more discussion on the effort to fit organizational studies into various places; disciplines, cultures, and institutions. Even organizational categories have parameters that often a single organization fits into in multiple ways due to the fact that organizations are multi-faceted. New institutional theory attempts to boil down the categories to allow for better evaluations and predict behavior. Similar to “the discursive concept of intertextuality posits that no text exists alone, but that texts achieve meaning only through interplay with interconnected texts and associated symbols, tropes, and other discursive devices” (Monge & Poole, 2008, p. 685), organizational communication is a study in socialization at the organizational level and is influenced by a multitude of disciplines.

Organizational Communication

Organizational communication is a subfield of general communication studies. It is also, as defined by businessdictionary.com, “a process by which activities of a society are collected and coordinated to reach the goals of both individuals and the collective group.” Expanding from the groundbreaking work of organizational communication scholars Smith and Turnerground (1995), The World Bank has adopted a “social constructionist” view of organizational communication and makes the distinction between that view and those who define organizational communication as a “container:”

- “1. The container approach assumes that organizations exist independently of communication and serve as containers that influence communication behavior. For example, organizational structures, such as hierarchical, are assumed to exist independently and influence the content and directional flow of communication.
2. The social constructionist approach assumes that communication creates the form and shape of organizations. For example, when organizational members consistently funnel their information through one person, they create a centralized network structure where one person maintains a high degree of power because s/he is at the hub and controls the flow of information. When people change the content and form of their communication such as transmitting their information to a larger array of people, they create new organizational structures, such as decentralized networks” (World Bank Brochure, n.d.).

After having the benefit of studying multiple undergraduate and graduate courses in the subfield of organizational communication, I designed this research from a social constructionist approach and defines and understands organizational communication as

“the way language is used to create different kinds of social structures, such as relationships, teams, and networks” (World Bank Brochure, n.d.).

Organizational communication is the intersection between the study of human communication and the study of human organizations. Organizational communication includes both the internal communication as well as external communication. The internal communication is the communication inside the organization compared to the external communication to constituents and consumers.

“Simply defined, communication is the transmission of information from one entity to another. Entities may include persons and various mechanical and electrical devices. The content of communication may be verbal, nonverbal, or symbolic. Elements in the process of communication include the notions of transmission, reception, storage, and transformation. Communication may be studied with regard to dyads, small groups, and organizations. So, there is no shortage of concepts and models that might be applied to communication in the program that is being evaluated” (Hogard & Ellis, 2006 p. 174).

Organizational communication is a relevant framework through which to view the Downtown Spokane Partnership; the DSP is an organization that integrates the communication between their own employees, boards, businesses in the Business Improvement District, and downtown visitors and consumers. In *The practitioner's guide for organizing an organization* (2004), author K.D. Mackenzie clarifies the integrative, interdependent components of organization : “Effective communication is a function of the organization's processes and structures. First fix the processes and then fix the

structures to carry out the processes and the effectiveness of communication will improve” (p. 70). Organizational sociology offers organizations a variety of frameworks to better their communication and mission-fulfillment. Although communication is one function of an organization, identifying the presence of a gap or breakdown in the communication of the organization will improve the effectiveness. In order to assist in identifying the gap in the organizational communication, literature was gathered to further look specifically at mission and the non-profit organization.

MISSION-DRIVEN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

After reviewing literature on the components of a mission statement and reasons for development for all types of organizations, the DSP’s status as an NPO indicated that a more specific inquiry was needed, beginning with a definition of the non-profit organization:

“An organization in which no owner, stockholder or trustee shares in profits and losses, and **which exists not to earn revenue but to promote a mission** that typically but not necessarily enhances the public welfare is considered a nonprofit. Generally there are four categories of nonprofit organizations: 1) voluntary organizations which are driven by creating social missions from values; 2) Public Service Contractors or PSCs that work as businesses that are built to serve the public and the economy without gaining profit; 3) People’s Organizations, or POs, which are interested in helping members with specific interests; and 4) Government Organized Organizations or NGOs, which provide

public policies that serve and benefit the community” (Lewis, 2001 as cited by Lassiter, 2007). [Emphasis added.]

Any study that seeks to understand the distinctive nature of NPOs relative to their mission statements must take stock of this essential difference: an NPO “exists not to earn revenue but to promote a mission.” The DSP, as belonging to the non-profit sector, can also be further categorized as a “public service contractor” that serves the public and economic vitality without gaining profit. Understanding the mutual influence that DSP has on the community and that the community has on DSP illustrates a unique trait of all NPOs: they are mission-driven.

By privileging the role of communication in the realization of the organizational mission, the question kept in mind is “Does this communication further advance our organization’s reason for existence? If not, how can it be made to do so?” (Zoldak, 2014, para. 4). Especially with the NPOs importance placed on mission, all communication should be aligned with the mission in an effort to always be fulfilling the mission.

A mission-driven organization must pay close attention to best practices when designing a mission statement. The common suggestion for for-profit organizations is that a mission statement should have about 100 words (David, David, & David, 2014). However, the suggestion for an NPO is for shorter mission statements, at around an average of 15 words according to the site “Top Non Profits” (topnonprofits.com, n.d.). The site provides three criteria for good mission statements, namely that they be “clear, memorable, and concise” which is comparable to the suggestions of David, David, & David (2014) of the mission being inspiring, enduring, concise, clear, and conducive to

both employees and customers. The site also lists examples of mission statements in the NPO sector, citing TED's as the shortest with two words: "Spreading Ideas." Both general and non-profit recommendations suggest that a mission statement should be clear, memorable, and concise (Bart, 1997; topnonprofits.com, n.d.). Mission statements for both sectors should also respond to the question of "Why do we exist?" The existential question for a for-profit organization typically requires more detail than that of an NPO. NPOs tend to have a more dialed-in focus on the mission to provide specific services to a specific group. The example of TED's two-word mission statement underscores how important it is to create statements that reflect organizational philosophy and mission. If the general public were unfamiliar with TED's more than 30 year status as a "conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged," we might be unsure of what was meant by their mission of "spreading ideas" ("TED", n.d.). So, while it is imperative to be concise in all mission statement design, the NPO needs to state their reasons for existing in a way that makes sense to those who might not be familiar with the NPO's work and/or any opportunities to engage in support or other interactions with the organization.

Further, organizational scholars claim that NPOs are "dependent upon continuing exchanges with the environments in which they operate. They are not closed systems, sealed off from their environment. They are open to and are particularly dependent upon the flow of resources from outside" (Heimovics, Herman, & Coughlin, 1993, p. 425). We know from the literature in organizational sociology that all organizations are impacted by their surroundings and exist through communication. However, NPOs are particularly

complex systems impacted by the structure of boards, staff, and the people they work to serve. All of these stakeholders and constituents make the NPO successful and relevant.

Any organization's mission statement will have a significant and self-referring impact on organizational performance-- which creates an impact on the mission performance. Importantly, recent research indicates that NPOs "may have to pay more attention to their mission statement, as it is critical to both organizational performance and commitment" (Patel, Booker, Ramos & Bart, 2015, p. 765). The notion of a mission-driven NPO derives from the decreased focus on income that for-profit organizations prioritize. Due to their decrease of focus in these other areas, NPOs face external challenges such as competition for private support, shifts in public funding, and increased demand for services.

Reframing Organizations

Most organizations exist with a mission to generate profit. NPOs, however, while focused on external funding, must use their mission to generate interest and funding; generating a profit is not their main focus. Sustainability, so that NPOs can continue to provide their primary services, becomes a primary focus. Analyzing and understanding the particular challenges that an NPO faces will influence the organization's sustainability.

Bolman & Deal's (2008) *Reframing Organizations* offers researchers an analytical approach for discovering the differences between a for-profit organization and an NPO while also highlighting the particular challenges that NPOs face. The book, a standard for students in Organizational Communication courses, provides for four frames

or “lenses” through which we can analyze an organization: Structural, Human Resources, Political, and Symbolic. The multiple lenses and skills in reframing allow organizational leaders to see old problems in a new light, as well as assist with confronting new challenges with different tools and strategies. Reframing expands understandings, responses, timing, and styles that managers apply to problems (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

The Structural frame’s well understood goals, roles and relationships, and management are essential to the organizational performance (Bolman & Deal, 2008). “Allowing procedures such as personnel systems and board performance standards to define individual and organizational effectiveness is also characteristic of this frame, as are the emphasis on certainty in mission and clarity of direction” (Heimovics, Herman, & Coughlin, 1993, p. 421). Because NPOs are mission focused, the structural frame often includes a hierarchy of board members who oversee executive directors. In turn, the executive directors maintain and manage staff. Volunteers may make up the largest body in the structure, all with varying degrees of commitment to the organizational mission.

According to the Human Resource frame, people are the most valuable resource of any organization and places an emphasis on effective leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008). NPOs like DSP have a balanced system of power. DSP is comprised of two governing boards and a staff to carry out the priorities defined by these boards. Communication between all channels must be clear and specific to result in mission fulfillment. “Nonprofit leaders who use this frame believe in sharing and helping. Delegation is important because it not only empowers others to take initiative but it also provides opportunities for personal growth and development. This frame defines problems and issues in interpersonal terms and encourages open communication, team

building, and collaboration” (Heimovies, Herman, & Coughlin, 1993, p. 421). The Human Resources frame, as it applies to NPOs, helps to refine this research and focus on how the mission of the DSP serves to guide and inspire communication internally and externally.

The Political frame assumes ongoing conflict or tension over the allocation of scarce resources or the resolution of differences, competing interests, and struggles for power (Bolman & Deal, 2008). DSP collaborates with many constituents including the City of Spokane and other Spokane advocacy organizations. The presence of two boards also creates the potential for conflict. Inherently, NPOs have to vie for resources in an environment where “scarce resources” are the norm. Therefore, the role of organizational leaders in NPOs becomes essential in managing inevitable political challenges.

“Politically oriented leaders not only understand how interest groups and coalitions evolve, they can also influence the impact of these groups upon the organization. Those who use the political frame exercise their personal and organizational power, and are sensitive to external factors that may influence internal decisions and policies”

(Heimovies, Herman, & Coughlin, 1993, p. 421). In order to achieve the mission of making downtown Spokane “the best it can be for people to live, work, and play,” DSP leadership must be prepared to understand and exert influence on internal and external forces that impact the non-profit’s mission.

The Symbolic frame focuses on how organizational life is socially understood on issues of meaning and faith (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Additionally, all organizations are “cultural and historical systems of shared meaning where group membership determines individual interpretations of organizational phenomena (Heimovies, Herman, &

Coughlin, 1993, p. 421).” DSP’s long history and involvement in downtown Spokane becomes part of their operating narrative and is embedded in their self-description and mission statement. Understanding perceptions of DSP from internal and external sources will help to align communication actions to the mission and reinforce the value of the services the organization provides.

By analyzing DSP and its business practices through Bolman and Deal’s four frames, organizational strengths and weaknesses can be identified. DSP can also use this four-frame method to further assess mission congruency and their overall viability as a non-profit, mission-driven organization.

SUMMARY

The review of literature provides a foundation for understanding organizational communication, including both internal and external. The mission statement is believed to be a driving force of this communication, especially for the non-profit organization. The use of mission statements in daily interactions and the congruency between the philosophical and practical understanding of the mission were the primary focus of this research in order to determine any relationship between how mission statements are utilized and how organizations successfully communicate in their daily operations.

Mission statements can be a valuable tool to organizations if they are used appropriately, and the research anticipates that there is a correlation between communication and fulfillment of the mission. An organization that perceives their mission statement as a way to check all decisions and determine how they compare to the organization’s visions and values would theoretically be more successful. If knowledge

of the mission statement is required and promoted by the organization's leadership system, then all employees would see the mission statement as a tool for their decision making. If mission statements and the organization's values are not being well promoted and practiced, employees would be unaware of the organization's expectations and procedures to fulfill the mission. NPOs, especially, should seek to know whether their communication effectively realizes the organization's reason for existence.

The review of the literature connected three threads or topics: mission statements, organizational sociology, and mission statements and non-profit organizations. This literature lays a foundation to integrate these topics in a unique way for the following research in communication and mission statements, suggesting four important foundational concepts for this research. First, it is necessary to have congruency between the mission statement and organizational actions. Second, if— according to the CCO— organizations originate and exist through communication, communication and the mission should have a strong and interanimating relationship. Third, employee understanding of the mission, and employee awareness of their role in fulfilling the mission, combines for an essential prerequisite for organizational success and sustainability. Lastly, NPOs tend to be more mission-focused which further elevates the need for all communication practices to be aligned with the mission.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Beginning with a restatement of the research questions that drive this research, this chapter will then review the research design, the plan for gathering and analyzing data, and the limitations of this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ 1. In what ways can DSP strengthen the alignment between perceptions of the mission statement and communication practices?

RQ 2. What is the level of congruency between communication practices and the mission statement?

RQ 3. How do the perceptions of downtown business owners, DSP staff, and DSP constituents align with DSP's own perceptions and mission statement?

RESEARCH DESIGN

While the researcher's interest in mission statements was already years in the making, this research has evolved out of an initial communication audit designed to study participant satisfaction. Having received approval from the Eastern Washington University IRB [see Appendix G] to use the mission statement questions, the researcher added to what is called "archived data" (data gathered from the winter 2016 communication audit), and the design of this research took shape. First, it is important to discuss the value of the communication audit before focusing on the case study approach from which this research evolved.

Initial Communication Audit Approach

The communication audit is essentially a process for acquiring data regarding communication for analysis (Clampitt & Girard, 1988). The communication audit is a systematic strategy of inquiry that guides what methods will be used to acquire and evaluate data. The communication audit provides insight and opportunities regarding areas of strength or areas that may need improvement or reinforcement. If communication within the organization is not strong and satisfying, there can be internal and external consequences that impact the organization's performance.

“The development and the existence of a mission statement and its communication across and beyond companies' borders might lead to increase of VAE [value added per employee] in a company and through this also to important social benefits” (Dermol, 2012, p. 333). Communication audits have been conducted to find the relationship between communication and another piece of the organization such as identification (Varona, 1996) or organizational commitment (Nakra, 2006). Although the research on mission statements is extensive, research on the relationship between communication satisfaction and the mission statement remains scant at best. By privileging the role of communication in the realization of the organizational mission, the researcher hopes to remedy that gap by asking audit participants, “Does this communication further advance our organization's reason for existence? If not, how can it be made to do so?” (Zoldak, 2014). It follows that if organizational communication is flawed or weak, the likelihood that it is properly and effectively serving the organizational mission is low. Using a communication audit as the instrument to measure the relationship between the communication of an organization and the strength of

perceptions should demonstrate not only mission recognition and recitation but also mission enactment.

“Across the various studies of organizational communication, the communication audit approach stands out for its demonstrated validity, reliability, and given motivated respondents, feasibility (Hargie & Tourish 2000; Tourish & Hargie 2004)” (as cited in Hogard & Ellis, 2006, p. 177). The communication audit has been used by many researchers to develop a clear plan of data collection and analysis. The communication audit fosters the use of triangulated methodology and the integration of result. The integration of the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (ComSat) will aid in evaluating the employees’ satisfaction of communication.

The communication audit was created using surveys, a focus group, and interviews. The participants of these instruments included Downtown Spokane Partnership Staff, DSP & BID Board Members, DSP Members, BID Ratepayers, and key constituents within the community.

Questions pertaining to participant understanding of the mission statement as well as the extent to which the participant referred to the mission statement were added to the instruments that made up the communication audit. Questions pertaining to the mission of DSP were integrated into the surveys and interviews that were distributed to DSP employees, DSP & BID Board Members, and BID Ratepayers.

The research conducted in this study served a dual purpose. The researcher used the serendipitous opportunity of a communication audit to provide a public service to the DSP while fulfilling a requirement towards the Master’s Degree in Communications. Due

to the magnitude of the study, collaboration to conduct the audit was a necessity. The researcher, along with the Downtown Spokane Partnership Leadership and the Communication Audit Team, developed topics of investigation and questions to identify with the research. The research was conducted in a Communication Audit Class, CMST 596, Winter Quarter of 2016. Mark Richard, President, and Elisabeth Hooker, Marketing and Programing Manager, of DSP came into the classroom to give the audit team a clearer understanding of all that DSP does for the downtown Spokane community. Another focus of their visits was to illustrate the relationships between DSP, DSP & BID Boards, and DSP Members, and BID Ratepayers. Together, DSP and the EWU Audit Team created the communication audit plan. DSP and the audit team identified constituent groups and individuals to invite to participate in the research.

The EWU Audit Team developed approaches to reach the different groups consisting of surveys, interviews, and focus groups. All DSP employees were asked to take the survey which included the ComSat (Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire), which is a standardized instrument designed to measure communication satisfaction of employees. This was selected to find the relationship between communication and mission statements. In addition to the ComSat, survey questions were developed in order to provide feedback to the Downtown Spokane Partnership as well as attempt to answer the identified research questions.

Within the EWU Audit Team, students were divided into small groups to independently develop potential survey questions. After potential survey items were developed, items were selected through large group discussion among the Audit Team. The survey items were then refined and reworded after discussion with the DSP. The

Audit Team developed between ten and twenty questions to be included in the base survey for the different constituent groups. The questions that were developed for the DSP employees consisted of questions to be answered on a seven-point Likert Scale or a three-point Likert Scale. The rest of the questions were open-ended survey, interview, and focus group questions.

The questions and approaches were presented to the President and Marketing and Programming Manager for feedback and approval. Professor Jeff Stafford obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to begin data collection. The audit team then proceeded with data collection, analysis of data, and development of the report. The audit team delivered preliminary results in an oral form to DSP Leadership including the President and Marketing and Programming Manager. The process would be concluded with the presentation of the findings to the DSP & BID Boards with the written communication audit report.

This study required use of mostly qualitative analysis of participant perceptions of the mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership gathered in the communication audit that surveyed several subpopulations of the DSP. The use of the ComSat was an integral part of this research with the integration of questions pertaining to the mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership to find the relationship between communication and the mission.

COMMUNICATION AUDIT TO CASE STUDY

This study is designed to focus on a singular case in order to answer the research questions listed above. A case study approach is most effective when an in-depth investigation is required and, beyond a quantitative analysis alone, allows for deeper

understanding of the behavioral conditions through the perspective of the actors involved.

This case study on the communication relationship to mission statements for the

Downtown Spokane Partnership evolved out of a mixed methods analysis planned for the

Communication Audit.

Data Gathering Plan

A case study does not limit what methodologies can be used or if the data should be qualitative or quantitative. From the case study, the plan to gather data rests on what is often called “the workhorse of qualitative methods”: the interview. Interviews will take the form of both literal interviews [see instrument in Appendix C] and online surveys. The questions focused on mission statements were added to the instrument designed in the Communication Audit course.

According to the editors of *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2011), interviews “consist of accounts given to the researcher about the issues in which he or she is interested. The topic of the research is not the interview itself but rather the issues discussed in the interview” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 529). The interview data from the DSP Leadership augmented the findings from the DSP Leadership open-ended survey; participants appeared to expand on their initial survey responses. Although interviews can give the most comprehensive results, the surveys were most convenient for both the researcher and participants due to time and location preferences. The use of open-ended questions, as well as asking the participants to rate their responses according to a Likert scale, provided an opportunity to compare and contrast the results for each method.

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data is gathered, the next step is to organize it and begin analysis. This study, in compliance with Human Subjects research protocols, initially ensured that all participant identities would remain confidential. To accomplish this, the researcher will first “scrub” the data for any identifying characteristics. Then the data will be analyzed for patterns in the responses relative to the questions being asked, especially when it comes to assessing the level of congruency between participants in the study.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this research include internal as well as external components. Having the research conducted in a classroom of graduate students, the number of researchers contributing to the projects was only limited by course enrollment, which impacted the research collection and analysis due to variables of communication among CMST 596 students. Also the participating students did not have past experiences in designing or conducting a communication audit to incorporate into the process. Extra time was taken in order to educate participating students about the communication audit process and theories. Because of the classroom setting, the class lasted 10 weeks and created a time constraint for designing, gathering, and analyzing the data. The scope grew from the initial research idea after discussions with DSP, as researchers collaborated to incorporate DSP’s ideas into the research. An external limitation resulted when, out of the 850 Ratepayers, contact information was provided for only 150, which limited the possible number of responses. Further research could be conducted with Downtown Spokane Partnership after the organization works to update and complete the external

database. A larger external database of Ratepayers could increase both sample size and participation from external constituents.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus on public scholarship required presenting the audit findings back to the DSP. This research also served to partially fulfill requirements for Eastern Washington University's master thesis. The analysis of results from the mission-focused questions that were integrated into the communication audit are highlighted in this chapter. Because participants were promised confidentiality, any potentially revealing responses were not included in this research analysis.

MISSION

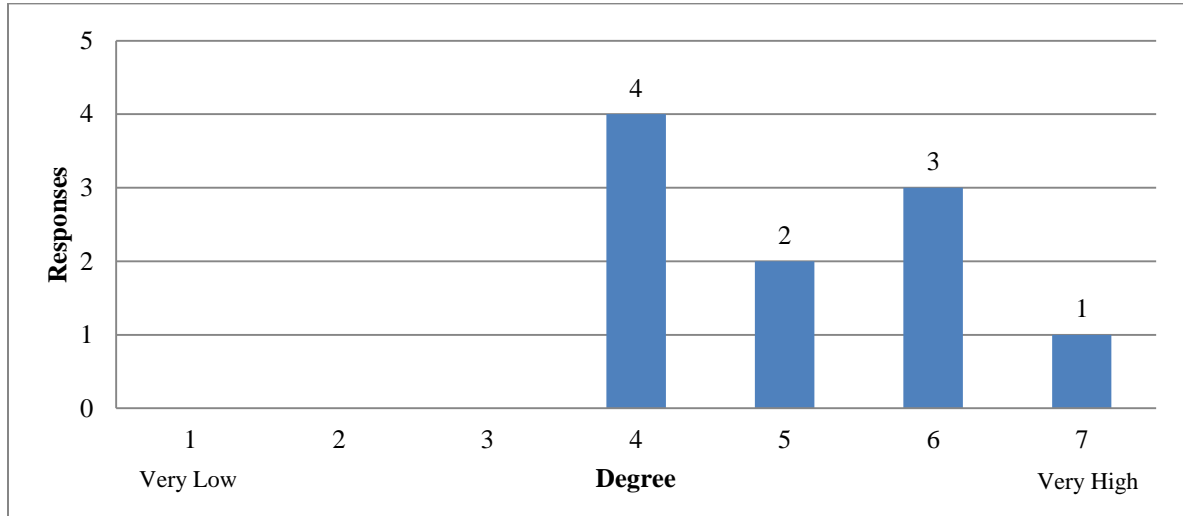
Downtown Spokane Partnership's mission is: "The Downtown Spokane Partnership is dedicated to the creation of a dynamic, safe, vital, livable and sustainable Downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region" (Downtown Spokane Partnership, n.d.).

SURVEYS

DSP Employees

The following questions were integrated in the DSP employee survey that was taken by Leadership, Clean Team, and Ambassadors.

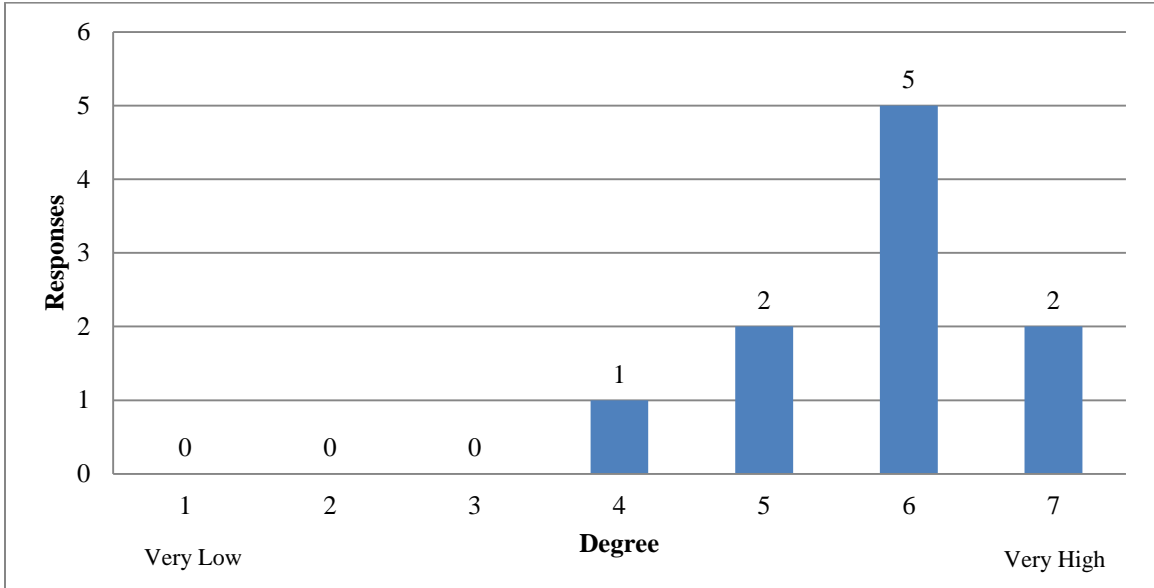
Table 4.1: Q 50. Extent to which you think about or refer to the mission statement while making daily decisions.



Mean	Standard Deviation	N
5.1	1.005	10

The majority of the respondents said they think about or refer to the mission statement an average amount of times while making daily decisions while the rest of the respondents reported thinking about the mission statement often to very often. All 10 employees responded that they think about the mission from an average to high degree while make daily decisions. The responses show that the employees perceive an alignment between their personal action and the mission of DSP.

Table 4.2: Q 52. Extent to which you feel you understand the mission of DSP.



Mean	Standard Deviation	N
5.8	0.9189	10

The DSP employees showed they perceived their own understanding of the mission as high. The DSP employees were then asked to give the mission statement of DSP in their own words to see if there was a correlation to the actual mission of DSP. If the mission is not well understood by the employees but they are thinking about the mission often before making daily decisions, then the mission would not be carried out properly.

Q 54. In your own words, can you explain what the mission of DSP is?

The DSP employees were asked to give the mission statement in their own words. Respondents identified key words like “*clean*”, “*vibrant*”, and “*safe*” which align with the actual mission statement of DSP: “The Downtown Spokane Partnership is dedicated

to the creation of a dynamic, safe, vital, livable and sustainable Downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region” (Downtown Spokane Partnership, n.d.). The employees also answered with words like “*welcoming visitors*”, “*advocate*”, and “*work as a community*” which are not words found in the mission, but words that answer how the mission is being fulfilled. The employees reported that they understood the mission and then showed that they knew what the mission of DSP is.

Q 55. How does your job and the work that you do fit into the overall success of the mission?

When asked how the employees felt their work supported the mission of DSP, respondents included words like “*smile*”, “*fun*”, and “*friendly*” which speaks to the culture of Downtown Spokane as well as the DSP. Respondents also said their job supports the mission “*in every way*” and another respondent said their support is “*an ongoing process.*”

This is an important finding relative to this research. We might assume that, when asked about mission application, participants would respond with action words because the question attempts to personalize *fulfillment* of the mission. However, participants revealed that environment and culture informed their perception of their application of the mission statement. In this sense, the way in which mission statements are carried out may differ from employee to employee, a pivotal finding for this research.

For review: we know that the mission statement is frequently referred to or thought about by DSP employees. We know that employees perceive that they know and understand the mission statement. And yet, when asked how they carry out the mission, the answers vary. If the DSP employees are not able to identify their personal roles in

fulfilling the mission of DSP, there is a potential for inefficient duplications of work. Worse, there is the potential that not all essential, mission-centered tasks are being accomplished.

DSP & BID Board Members

These open-ended questions were sent to DSP & BID Board Members in an online survey.

Q 18. In your own words, please describe how you perceive the mission of DSP.

Three themes were uncovered in the responses from the DSP & BID Board Members: 1. Little to no knowledge of the mission or respondents did not answer the question; 2. Identification of the big picture rather than the mission statement; 3. Use of key words found in the mission statement.

Respondents showed they had little to no knowledge or did not answer the question by saying

“I know little of DSP”

“It’s defined by statute. We should not stray from that and should not give in to pressure from the City or others to stray from the statutory dictates”

Respondents identified the big picture by saying

“make downtown Great”

“making downtown the best that it can be”

“promote the maintenance and development of the downtown area”

Other DSP & BID Board Members gave responses which align with the actual mission of DSP.

“Help build an economically, culturally and artistically vibrant downtown. Increase the cleanliness and safety of downtown”

“To assist Spokane in developing into a balanced, vital and safe downtown. Looking at balance of retail, attractions/events, downtown living and improvements that will make Spokane attractive to locals, and visitors”

“I believe the real mission of the DSP is to ensure we have a safe and sustainable downtown that is poised for growth for future generations. To me this means that our DSP should be continually looking for ways to improve Downtown Spokane, nurture new ideas that will allow us to grow and bring new people and new businesses to downtown, all while sustaining a safe workplace and living environment for our current residents and businesses”

Comparing these responses to the actual mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership “The Downtown Spokane Partnership is dedicated to the creation of a dynamic, safe, vital, livable and sustainable Downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region”

(Downtown Spokane Partnership, n.d.) shows that the majority of the respondents used key words such as “*vibrant*”, “*safe*”, and “*clean*.” If the purpose of the staff is to accomplish tasks assigned by the DSP & BID Board Members, it is important that the DSP & BID Board Members are aware of the mission which most of the members are aware, but there is room for improvement.

Q19. Please describe how DSP is fulfilling its mission and objectives.

When the DSP & BID Board Members were asked how DSP is fulfilling its mission and objectives, three themes were found: 1. The respondents didn’t know or didn’t address the question directly; 2. The respondents tended to use descriptors to suggest a positive climate, or cultural attribute; and, 3. The respondents used descriptors to suggest specific actions.

The first group of respondents that didn't know or that did not directly answer the questions said

"I don't feel I can answer this question yet"

"Again, I work with BID"

"Not sure yet"

"I am on the BID board"

"Have no idea...no communication to let me know"

The second theme found was use of culture words. These respondents did not give specific examples on how DSP is fulfilling their mission, but rather expressed that how DSP was fulfilling their mission was satisfactory to the respondent.

"good job"

"I think its doing a fine job with its core duties (as I perceive them) public safety and clean streets. I also think that the DSP does a good job advocating for businesses when faced with antibusiness legislation, rule making, and other forces working against business owners in downtown Spokane"

"active and open effort"

While it is great to hear that the respondents are happy with the efforts of DSP in fulfilling the mission, they did not identify the ways that they see the mission being executed.

The third theme found was respondent's use of action words. These respondents were able to give specific examples on how Downtown Spokane Partnership is fulfilling their mission.

"The BID does a terrific job on the day to day clean and safe agenda. There is a constant need to be engaged with city hall and the police department in those

areas. Marketing downtown is slightly weaker but fairly good. Generating reliable and timely data on a number of topics, like housing, could be greatly improved. That data can be critical to attracting businesses and customers to downtown”

“through political activism, education, community involvement at several levels”

“I think that the advocacy that the board members and Mark Richard does helps inform policy makers of the impacts of the decision makers actions, both positive and negative. The clean green team and ambassadors work with city employees to create a safe and inviting downtown area”

“The DSP is fulfilling this mission by partnering with community stakeholders to accomplish great things, such as the University District Housing Study. The DSP partnered with the City and the GSI to assist in securing funding for the UD gateway bridge. Collaboration with the STA and private developers also aided in bringing new businesses downtown, such as the new Urban Outfitters. They are also supporting small business start ups like Window Dressings to help revitalize old store fronts and deter vandalism in vacant spaces, helping to stop crime and bring beautification to the city”

The responses by the participants that identify the actions that the DSP is doing will be helpful for DSP to understand their constituents’ perspectives. The DSP can use this feedback to potentially grow or highlight areas that were not identified by the participants that the DSP sees as a priority.

The DSP & BID Boards have a spectrum of insight on how DSP is fulfilling their mission ranging from little to no idea to a clear idea. The respondents that didn’t know how the mission was being fulfilled may be new to the board or have not had much involvement at the time of participating in the survey.

DSP Members & BID Ratepayers

These open-ended questions were sent to DSP Members & BID Ratepayers in an online survey.

Q 9. What do you know about the Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP), its mission, and key objectives?

When the Ratepayers and members were asked what they knew pertaining to the mission of DSP, they tended to offer less comprehensive and clear responses compared to the DSP & BID Boards and the DSP employees. The big picture was identified by some Ratepayers by stating

“Non-voluntary, not-for profit creation of the City/BID to promote the downtown area”

“Support the growth and expansion of Downtown”

“Promoting downtown as a desirable destination for businesses and general public”

Other respondents were not familiar with the mission or stated that they were generally familiar and did not provide examples.

Q 10. What do you believe are the priorities of DSP?

When Ratepayers were asked the priorities of the DSP, half of the respondents identified the mission directly or indirectly while others were not sure of the priorities. Some respondents provided the priorities that the DSP is working on to support their mission.

The respondents that identified the mission when asked what the priorities are of DSP had responses such as

“Security, cleanliness, upgrading downtown Spokane, creating a welcoming environment of people”

“Clean, safe downtown”

“Clean, safe and vibrant downtown”

“Safety, keeping it clean, and attracting businesses”

The respondents that identified the priorities that supported the mission responded

“Essentially try to convince people to spend money downtown”

*“Representing the business point of view to City staff and elected officials.
Promoting Spokane as a good place for new businesses to locate.”*

“Parking, law enforcement, facilitate alternate forms of transportation, promote business opportunities”

It is notable that when respondents were asked the priorities of DSP, the mission was identified more accurately than when asked what the mission of DSP was. It is great to see that the majority of the respondents were able to give concrete examples of the priorities of the DSP to model that they are familiar with all that DSP does.

Q 12. Which DSP services does your business benefit from or take advantage of?

When asked which services the Ratepayers felt that they benefited from, some respondents shared that they did not benefit from any service directly, while most were able to identify many services that benefited themselves and their clients.

“Clean Team, strategic planning”

“Ambassador Patrol”

“All the services they do make our clients feel safe, welcome and help them to enjoy coming down to our office.”

“Security, promotion to our city guests, awareness amongst business owners , programs to beautify our business”

“clean team, security people, programs to make the downtown more attractive-trees, lights,”

The mission is strong at DSP and the culture that is fostered is well-known and liked by the employees, DSP & BID Board Members, DSP Members, and BID Ratepayers. The mission is clear to most respondents that participated in the survey,

while how the mission is being fulfilled is not as clearly identified. The mission is seen as a goal that the team at DSP is constantly working towards to make downtown Spokane an attractive place for people to work, live, and play.

INTERVIEWS

Interview with DSP Leadership

Q 2. What is the mission of DSP and do you think it is relevant for the constituents?

Q 3. In what ways does your job help accomplish this mission?

The responses from the interviews with the Leadership aligned with the responses in the survey. One respondent from Leadership said in an interview

“Our mission is to build a thriving downtown, one which works for people that want to live here, want to work here, and play here.”

The infrastructure that has been built up over the last 20 years facilitates business in the downtown. The fact that 30,000 people come into the downtown every day to work reflects long-term, and largely unseen incremental efforts. I would expect that average downtown business employee is not aware of our presence. The relevant work to improve infrastructure is like background noise that’s there but doesn’t necessarily get noticed. The physical improvements have been critical to downtown development.”

This respondent seems to compare DSP and the work that they do as “the man behind the curtain” and the work that they do may not always be directly noticed, but if their presence was not there absence would be noticed and downtown Spokane would be impacted. Another respondent said:

“I see the mission as constant and ongoing. We strive to improve and grow the downtown for the benefit of the entire city and region. The mission is always a work in progress, but even when a goal is accomplished, there is a new goal to work towards. The whole downtown needs to have the same mission that everyone is involved in, DSP or not. The goals and pride in the city is relevant. Business is

successful which makes DSP successful and gives people the opportunity to utilize everything they [DSP] have to offer.”

This respondent is focused on culture and community of the entire downtown Spokane area, even outside of the DSP. The responses from other Leadership also identified a goal of all of downtown being a collective unit working towards goals together to make a larger impact on the downtown Spokane community.

Interview with DSP & BID Board Members

Q 12. How would you describe the mission of the DSP?

Q 13. Do you feel that DSP is fulfilling its objectives and mission statement?

Q 14. What are some ways DSP can further its mission?

The responses in the interviews with DSP & BID Board Members aligned with the open-ended responses in the interview. Due to the smaller sample of interviews, no additional themes were identified.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The literature review explored, among other things, the essential criteria for effective mission statements and the guidelines for developing them. These guidelines were applied to the mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership: “The Downtown Spokane Partnership is dedicated to the creation of a dynamic, safe, vital, livable and sustainable Downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region” (Downtown Spokane Partnership, n.d.). The mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership has 27 words, which is twice the recommended average of 10-15 words by “Top Non-Profits.” This suggests that DSP might want to review whether their statement is as concise and clear as it needs to be. Although there is significance in having a concise statement in order to be more memorable, having a comprehensive statement addressing who DSP serves and how is the largest priority.

The concept of organizational sustainability, as found in the literature, is an important consideration for NPOs and is clearly a priority for DSP. While their mission statement includes “sustainability” as well as other priorities (i.e., “dynamic, safe, vital, [and] livable”), it is not clear who the DSP serves or how. As they aim for a more concise representation of their mission, they should seek to clarify why they exist and who they serve in order to resolve any conflicting perceptions.

The research gathered by the communication audit assisted DSP by identifying areas of opportunity for growth as well as areas of strength. In this study, a strength emerged relative to the level of mission-based congruency between those within the organization and their external constituents. However, there remains an opportunity for

increased internal mission-based congruency, especially concerning alignment between the mission statement and DSP employee actions.

The literature review also provided the foundation for understanding the relationship between communication and the mission of Downtown Spokane Partnership. Additionally, it is necessary to have congruency between the mission statement and organizational actions. Second, if— according to the CCO—organizations originate and exist through communication, organizational communication and the mission should have a strong and interanimating relationship. Third, employee understanding of the mission, and employee awareness of their role in fulfilling the mission, combines for an essential prerequisite for organizational success and sustainability. Lastly, NPOs tend to be more mission-focused, which further elevates the need for all communication practices to be aligned with the mission. These are all strategies the DSP could use to improve both their mission statement and how it is “lived” organizationally.

The findings of the research aligned with the findings from the literature review. The DSP employees responded that the mission statement is frequently referred to or thought about by employees. The employees also responded that they perceive that they understand the mission statement and then were able to confirm that by stating how they understand the mission statement in their own words. But when asked how they carry out the mission, the answers varied significantly. If the DSP employees are not able to identify their personal roles in fulfilling the mission of DSP, there is a risk that essential tasks are being duplicated (creating inefficiencies), or that tasks are not being accomplished at all.

The DSP & BID Boards offer a broad range of responses on how DSP is fulfilling their mission ranging from little to no idea to a clear idea. The DSP can use this feedback to potentially grow or highlight areas that were not identified by the participants that the DSP sees as a priority.

The priorities of DSP are well known and can be identified by members of the differing constituent groups. The culture of DSP that is fostered is well known and liked by the employees, DSP & BID Board Members, DSP Members, and BID Ratepayers. The mission is clear to most respondents that participated in the survey, while how the mission is being fulfilled is not as clearly identified. The mission is seen as a goal that the team at DSP is constantly working towards to make downtown Spokane an attractive place for people to work, live, and play.

The three research questions were created to find the relationship between communication and the mission of DSP.

RQ 1. In what ways can DSP strengthen the alignment between perceptions of the mission statement and communication practices?

RQ 2. What is the level of congruency between communication practices and the mission statement?

RQ 3. How do the perceptions of downtown business owners, DSP staff, and DSP constituents align with DSP's own perceptions and mission statement?

DSP could revise their mission statement to strengthen the alignment between perceptions of the mission statement and the communication practices, as posed in RQ 1. In response to RQ 2, it was found that many DSP participants knew the mission statement

well and how to carry the mission out while others could identify the mission, but were lacking in application. Findings pertaining to RQ 3 revealed the alignment of perceptions of the DSP mission was high and respondents have identified the growth and changes. Overall, three main areas of additional improvements would be internal communication, external communication, and creating procedures to support the mission.

Because Downtown Spokane Partnership has non-profit status, the need to be mission-driven is elevated to a priority, especially with the boards' influence of power and the large community they aim to serve. Refining the mission statement of Downtown Spokane Partnership would assist in creating congruency between the mission and the organizational practices to fulfill the mission. This congruency would then aid in addressing of whether their communication further advances the organization's reason for existence. If the answer is no, then the next question is, "How can it be made to do so?" (Zoldak, 2014, para. 4).

SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Internal Communication

A deeper focus by DSP on the flows of internal communication between the Leadership, Clean Team, and Ambassadors could improve some issues regarding timely projects, miscommunication, and incomplete communication. A focus on internal communication could also assist in external communication and increase congruency in the communication that reaches external audiences. Further research could be done to develop and define strategies to increase the internal communication.

External Communication

DSP could also benefit from improving the DSP Members and BID Ratepayers database in order to communicate with their external groups more efficiently and effectively. Increasing the communication with DSP Members and BID Ratepayers could ultimately increase the communication and presence of DSP with downtown Spokane's audiences. Further research could be done to see if the current communication is reaching the right people and if the communication is being acted upon.

Mission-Focused

The last area of improvement would be to further identify and create procedures in which objectives can be accomplished to support the overall mission of DSP. The mission is known by DSP employees, Board Members, and participating DSP Members, and BID Ratepayers, but there does not seem to be a clear way for the mission to be achieved. Strengthening internal communication will increase the mission fulfillment of DSP which in turn will positively impact external communication to constituents. Also, the DSP should ensure that Board Members have a clear sense of the DSP's mission and prioritize it so that their actions serve to strengthen its relevance in daily practice.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

Downtown Spokane Partnership Communication Audit
Dr. Jeff Stafford, Professor of Communication, jstafford@ewu.edu

Purpose and Benefits

The benefits of this study are to potentially give suggestions to the Downtown Spokane Partnership to increase their communication in hopes to help them better fulfill their mission of the creation of a dynamic, safe, vital, livable and sustainable Downtown as the basis of an economically healthy region.

Procedures

This study is designed to measure the congruency of communication internally as well as externally with Ratepayers, Board Members, and staff. If you agree to be in the study, I/we will ask you to potentially participate in a confidential survey, a confidential focus group, or a confidential interview. Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. You are free not to answer any questions which you find objectionable. Any identifying information will be removed from the final research report. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to these records. These records will be maintained confidentially for 3 years and then destroyed. In any sort of report that I/we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

Risk, Stress, or Discomfort

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Eastern University or DSP and will result in no penalty. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships and without penalty.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

The study described above has been explained to me, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I understand that by signing this form I am not waiving my legal rights. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this form.

Signature of Subject

Date

If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this research or any complaints you wish to make, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protection Administrator rgalm@ewu.edu.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY INTRO LETTER

DSP is conducting some research with our members and key stakeholders to gather data on DSP and its communication with you and other constituents.

This is part of our ongoing self-assessment as we work to improve our service to you and our community.

Our goal is threefold.

First, to find out what is working well.

Second, to find out what can be improved.

And finally, to get input on how you feel DSP can better serve our community.

We are asking that you participate in a survey that consist of open and closed questions.

The link to the survey is [XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX](#).

The research is being conducted by a graduate student team from the Communication Department at Eastern Washington University under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Stafford.

The survey is confidential and none of the data collected will be connected back to you either directly or indirectly.

Please give us your time to help DSP make more effective contributions to our community.

Thank you for your time and support.

Mark Richard
DSP President

Jeff Stafford
Eastern Washington University

If you have any questions about this project you can contact Dr. Stafford at jstafford@ewu.edu.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW INTRO LETTER

DSP is conducting some research with our members and key stakeholders to gather data on DSP and its communication with you and other constituents.

This is part of our ongoing self-assessment as we work to improve our service to you and our community.

Our goal is threefold.

First, to find out what is working well.

Second, to find out what can be improved.

And finally, to get input on how you feel DSP can better serve our community.

You will be contacted by a member of the audit team to schedule the interview. If you cannot attend, you will be able to give your input through a survey. The link to the survey is XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

The research is being conducted by a graduate student team from the Communication Department at Eastern Washington University under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Stafford.

The interview/focus group will be confidential and none of the data collected will be connected back to you either directly or indirectly.

Please give us your time to help DSP make more effective contributions to our community.

Thank you for your time and support.

Mark Richard
DSP President

Jeff Stafford
Eastern Washington University

If you have any questions about this project you can contact Dr. Stafford at jstafford@ewu.edu.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCRIPT – DSP LEADERSHIP

Hello, my name is _____. I am part of a communication audit team from Eastern Washington University. We are conducting this Communication Audit with the hope of learning about communication within DSP and to gather your thoughts about how to improve the organization.

My colleagues _____ and _____ will be taking notes throughout this interview.

The audit consists of personal interviews with DSP leadership and staff, a survey and focus groups. As part of the Leadership Team we felt that you were in a good position to give insight into the DSP organizational communication and related areas of interest. We hope that you will volunteer information about these topics to help us develop a comprehensive picture of DSP. The interview should take 30-45 minutes.

Anything we discuss now will be held in confidence and we can stop at any time. We will use this information to give a final report, but we will never identify people or provide information in such a way that might allow others to identify specific individuals.

Now, before I ask my questions, do you have any questions about our general purpose and anything else?

1. Can you tell me about what you do here at DSP?
2. What is the mission of DSP and do you think it is relevant for the constituents?
3. In what ways does your job help accomplish this mission?
4. What constraints limit your ability to accomplish your tasks?
5. What are some ways DSP communicates with its members and BID Ratepayers?
6. How do BID Ratepayers and DSP members communicate with the staff?
7. What new, or different, methods could DSP incorporate in communicating with Ratepayers, business owners, and the BID?
8. How effective is communication within the Leadership team of DSP?
9. How effective is communication within the Ambassador and Clean Team of DSP?
10. Are you aware of any emerging business trends that might be beneficial to DSP?
11. Do you feel there is growth potential within your current position?

12. What priorities should be added to DSP within the next five years?

13. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

We would like to thank you again for participating today. If you think of anything later we have a sheet with my contact information that you can take with you.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONS – LEADERSHIP, CLEAN TEAM, AMBASSADORS

The following six questions were integrated into a fifty six question survey that included the Downs & Adrian (2004) Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (ComSat). The data gathered from the mission focused questions is the only data pertinent to this study.

Researcher Added Questions

Very dissatisfied

Very satisfied

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. Extent to which you think about or refer to the mission statement while making daily decisions
2. Extent to which you think about or refer to vision statement while making daily decisions
3. Extent to which you feel you understand the mission of DSP
4. Extent to which you understand the vision of DSP
5. In your own words can you explain what the mission of DSP is?
6. How does your job and the work that you do fit into the overall success of the mission?

APPENDIX E: SURVEY QUESTIONS – BOARD MEMBERS

Thank you for taking the time to complete this communication survey. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete.

This survey is part of a communication audit being conducted by communication studies graduate students at EWU. Dr. Jeffrey Stafford, Professor of Communications is the principal investigator. The research has been requested and approved by Mark Richard, President and CEO of Downtown Spokane Partnership to evaluate communication practices between DSP and its constituents.

The overall audit consists of personal interviews with DSP & BID Board Members and staff, constituent surveys and focus groups.

General

1. Which board do you represent?
2. Do you have a specific position within the board?
3. How long have you been affiliated with Spokane's downtown business community?
4. What is your professional background and how did you first become affiliated with the DSP/BID Board?
5. What prompted you to volunteer to serve on the board?
6. How many terms have you served on the board?

Awareness

1. Do you feel your opinion and ideas are heard and respected during board meetings?
2. In what ways do you feel that your participation on the board impacts how DSP/BID prioritizes and achieves its objectives?
3. How much awareness or information do you have regarding priorities and ideas formulated by other Board Members?

4. How frequently do you meet and discuss issues and ideas with other Board Members?
5. Do you feel that Board Members meet and communicate often enough to raise awareness and discuss matters of importance in a timely manner?

Communication

1. Outside of board meetings, how often do you engage in communication with DSP and what communication methods are used?
2. How effective do you feel the current level of communication is between Board Members and DSP?
3. As a Board Member, what is your perception of the amount of influence you have on the direction and priorities set by DSP?
4. In what ways are internal discussions within board meetings communicated to Non-Board Members?
5. How frequently do you contact or receive communication from Ratepayers that are in your district?
6. What constraints do you encounter, either real or perceived, which impede your ability to communicate with DSP for maximum effectiveness?

Interests

1. In your own words, what is your understanding of the priorities that DSP has set?
2. Of these, please describe strategic priorities that you are personally engaged with?
3. What are your personal top three objectives as a DSP/BID Board Member that you want to communicate or implement?
4. Are there any additions or changes you would like to see regarding the priorities or direction being taken by DSP?

Mission

1. In what ways do you feel DSP is meeting the objectives specified in its mission statement?
2. How do you feel DSP could further its mission?

APPENDIX F: SURVEY QUESTIONS –DSP MEMBERS AND BID RATEPAYERS

Most of us assume that the quality and amount of communication in our jobs contribute to both our job satisfaction and our productivity. Through this study we hope to find out how satisfactory communication practices are and what suggestions you have for improving them. We appreciate your taking time to complete the questionnaire. It should take 20 to 30 minutes.

Your answers are completely confidential so be as frank as you wish. This is not a test- your opinion is the only right answer. Do not sign your name; we do not wish to know who you are. The answers will be combined into groups for reporting purposes.

About the survey: This communication survey is being conducted by Eastern Washington University communication studies graduate students and has been requested and approved by Mark Richard, President and CEO, DSP.

1. What kind of business do you currently operate?

Retail

Casual Dining

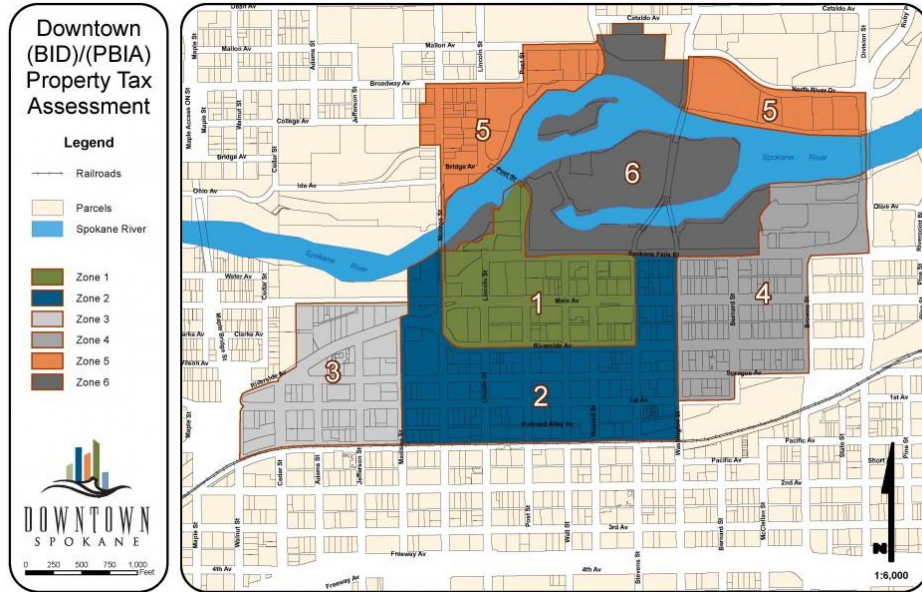
Fine Dining

Hospitality

Entertainment

Other

2. What district does your business currently reside in?



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

3. Do you own or occupy the building in which you reside in? Yes, No
4. What do you know about the Downtown Spokane Partnership, its mission and key objectives?
5. What do you believe are the priorities of DSP?
6. What changes or additions would you like to see in regard to the priorities of DSP?
7. Which DSP services do you benefit from or take advantage of?
8. Which DSP services have no value for your local business?
9. In what ways does DSP affect your local business?
10. What have your experiences been like with the DSP ambassadors?

11. How well do you feel the ambassadors are performing their duties?
12. In what ways could the ambassadors be of more help to your local business?
13. What are your perceptions of DSP's management and leadership team?
14. In what ways does the team communicate with you and your local business?
15. In what ways do you feel the team can improve their communications with you and your local business?
16. What methods does DSP use to communicate with your local business?
17. Is this communication reaching the right people in your local business?
18. What would be more effective ways of communicating with your local business in order to reach the appropriate people or positions?
19. How do you feel DSP can best represent businesses in Downtown Spokane?
20. Have you expressed your ideas to DSP and what was their response?
21. What ways do you prefer to communicate your suggestions to DSP?

Thank you, for completing the survey. If you have any final thoughts, please write them down below.

APPENDIX G: EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IRB APPROVAL



Eastern Washington University
at Cheney and Spokane

MEMORANDUM

To: Lindsey Klemmer, Department of Department of Communication Studies, 229
COM

From: Sarah K^{SK}eller, Chair, Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research

Date: May 10, 2016

Subject: Review of HS-5070 *Master Thesis Using Archived Data from CMST 596,
Communication Audit of Downtown Spokane Partnership*

Human subjects protocol HS-5070 *Master Thesis Using Archived Data from CMST 596,
Communication Audit of Downtown Spokane Partnership* has been determined to be exempt from further review according to federal regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects under CFR Title 45, Part 46.101(b)(1-6). Research qualifying for an exemption is valid for a period of one year, to May 10, 2017. If you wish to continue gathering data for the study after that date you must file a Renewal of Approval application *prior to its expiration*, otherwise the project will be closed and you would need to submit a new application for IRB review if you wish to continue the research.

A signed, approved copy of your application is enclosed.

If subsequent to initial approval the research protocol requires minor changes, the Office of Grant and Research Development should be notified of those changes. Any major departures from the original proposal must be approved by the appropriate IRB review process before the protocol may be altered. A Change of Protocol application must be submitted to the IRB for any substantial change in protocol.

If you have additional questions please contact me at 359-7039; fax 359-2474; email: skeller@ewu.edu. It would be helpful if you would refer to HS-5070 if there were further correspondence as we file everything under this number. Thank you.

cc: R.Galm
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Eastern Washington University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

VITA

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EDUCATION

Master of Science, Communication Studies

Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA Graduation: June 2016

Thesis: *Mission-Driven Communication for the Non-Profit Organization: A Case Study of the Downtown Spokane Partnership*

Public Scholarship Certificate

Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies

Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA Graduation: June 2014

Leadership Certificate

Minor: Business

HONORS & AWARDS

- Graduate Assistantship, Communications Department, 2014-2016, Eastern Washington University
- Graduated Magna Cum Laude, Eastern Washington University, 2014
- Undergraduate Scholarship from the George Bartol Memorial Scholarship Fund

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Fairwood Farmers' Market, Spokane, WA – *Secretary Board of Directors*
2015 – PRESENT

PostNet, Spokane, WA - *Print and Graphics Manager*
AUGUST 2011 – PRESENT

Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA - *Graduate Teaching Assistant*
AUGUST 2014 – JUNE 2016

Eastern Washington University, Cheney, WA – *Focus Group Recorder and Transcriber for grant-funded research project on Public Scholarship*
APRIL 2016

Associated Press, Spokane, WA - *Editorial Assistant*
AUGUST 2012 - PRESENT, SEASONALLY

LEAD Conference, Spokane, WA - *Site Liaison*
JULY 2009 - PRESENT, ANNUALLY

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Northwest Communication Association Conference – 2016

Paper Presentation: *The Life of Pi: Which Story Do You Prefer?*

Northwest Communication Association Conference – 2015

Graduate Research Panel on Thesis Explorations