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Management Practices for An Art-Based Community Program: How to Design A 100 Year Company!

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ABSTRACT

Over the past six years, Molloy College students and faculty have presented at the Northeast Business & Economics Association Conference the outcomes of a pedagogical process that allows students to demonstrate evidence of learning. This paper reports on the student consulting work presented to the leadership team and the Board of Directors of a local not-for-profit organization. The consulting problem identified by the leaders of the organization is that ‘they are new to running a corporation’. The Officers are not traditional managers. The work of these organizational leaders had been focused on the corporation’s cause. Therefore, these organizational leaders need to establish all of the management practices to run this business. The consulting solution developed by the capstone student consultants included a 4-tier plan, which focused on (1) the organizational structure, (2) financial structure, (3) fundraising strategies, and (4) marketing/branding plan. There are two goals for writing this paper. The first is to tell the story of *Backyard Players and Friends Inc.* and the business plan that offered this organization, not just consulting advice, but an executable turnkey executable set of solutions focused directly on the real-world problem. The second goal for this paper is to demonstrate one college’s educational strategy to help graduate students develop the skills and knowledge needed to lead at an advanced level, *and* to develop a disposition toward social responsibility and ethical leadership.

Keywords

Business education, social responsibility, pedagogical philosophy, pedagogy, capstone, ethical leadership

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Over the past six years, Molloy College students and faculty have presented at the Northeast Business & Economics Association (NBEA) Conference the outcomes of a pedagogical process that allows students to demonstrate evidence of learning. Back in 2012, the Division of Business at Molloy College started an educational experience unique in its style. This experience has been fully integrated into the curriculum of both the undergraduate and graduate business programs. This pedagogical philosophy suggests that students learn by doing and the evidence of learning must be explicitly demonstrated. The Molloy College faculty has learned that there is no better evidence than the students’ self-report and demonstration that the knowledge and the skills acquired within the learning environment applied to the *real world* (Mackenzie, 2017).

A series of articles, coupled with student presentations at the annual NBEA conference, have documented the development of this educational journey over the past six years. The annual meeting of the NBEA has become a traditional venue for these students to demonstrate their learning to a larger audience of practitioners and academics.

The mission of Molloy College calls to action a commitment to social responsibility, service, community, and study. Molloy’s focus on academic excellence and the promotion of lifelong learning demonstrates the transformative education experienced by the students (Molloy College Mission Statement, n.d.). Therefore, these students use their business knowledge and skills to solve business problems for organizations that serve society and support social good.

Briefly, each semester the graduate students form consulting teams that work directly for a client that serves society. The client may be a government agency (e.g., Commission for Human Rights), a municipality (e.g., the Village of Freeport, NY), or a not-for-profit organization. The client presents the students with a real-world business problem that it is facing. The students, having no prior knowledge of the client or the industry, must develop actionable solutions for the client.

This paper reports on the consulting work conducted for the not-for-profit organization, *Backyard Players and Friends, Inc.*

2 PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Graduate education at Molloy College establishes sequential goals that will provide the student all that he or she needs to enter into the world of business. Threaded through the knowledge and the skills that are taught, is the intention to influence the development of ethical leaders, which will serve our society. Sadly, a lack of socially responsible leadership is prevalent in today's society. In the past, business had been viewed as a cutthroat profession where greed and self-promotion thrive. It is essential that ethical leaders recognize that *good business* will improve an economic system *and* allow its citizens to thrive, becoming contributing members of the society. Molloy Business believes that innovative and ethical capitalistic business can integrate a social focus that serves the greater good (Mackenzie, 2017).

The Molloy College MBA program developed a Capstone Experience in 2012 that aligned with the Annual Theme of Civic Engagement. Six years later the benefits of this Capstone experience can be seen in the students graduating with a clear focus on leadership that serves society.

The Spring 2017 MBA Capstone class was divided into two consulting teams serving two clients. The clients are selected by the Dean. The clients must have a social mission, be a not-for-profit, or a government agency. The client identifies the real-world problem that its organization is facing. The team presenting its results in this paper worked with *Backyard Players and Friends (BYPF)*. It used the Bloomberg Philanthropies, "Mayor's Challenge" application to guide the process to solve the problem. The process takes the students through four stages: (1) establish a vision for solving the problem, (2) develop a detailed, actionable, implementation plan, (3) study the impact of the plan on the problem, and (4) determine if the solution can be replicated to other industries. (Bloomberg Philanthropies Competition Overview, 2017).

3 THE CLIENT

Backyard Players & Friends (BYPF), is an inclusive arts-based not-for-profit community program. It offers programs for kids, teens, and young adults of all abilities. BYPF offers programs such as: theatre arts, yoga, recreational enrichment, movie nights, tennis, Zumba, and dance fitness. BYPF began when its directors saw a need for more community programs for young adults with special needs. With an initial vision of having just a few children in its camp program, BYPF has grown to have over 100 participants and multiple well-established programs. Its rapid growth, while beneficial to the community, has caught BYPF off guard in terms of having a proper foundation and organizational structure.

4 THE CONSULTING PROBLEM

The consulting problem identified by the leaders of *Backyard Players and Friends, Inc.* is that they are new to running a corporation. The Officers are not traditional managers. The work of these organizational leaders had been focused on the corporation's amazing *cause*. Therefore, the leaders of Backyard Players and Friends, Inc. need consultants to establish all of the management practices to run this business. That includes, but is not limited to: (1) meaningful bylaws that include board member roles, membership, meetings (when and how they are run), compliance; and (2) practices for managing a growing organization, establishing financial statements, IRS requirements, a management structure for both *now* and the *future*, leadership roles and responsibilities, corporate communications insurance, and more.

5 THE CONSULTING SOLUTION

The consulting solution developed by the capstone student consultants included a 4-tier plan to stabilize the client. The plan focused on (1) the organizational structure, (2) financial structure, (3) fundraising strategies, and (4) marketing/branding strategies. Each tier of the plan offered in-depth analysis and an executable, step-by-step executable plan.

Organizational Structure

In order for BYPF to be successful for years to come, an organizational structure was designed with defined roles for the individual leadership positions. Each member of the organization now has his or her clearly articulated responsibilities that, collectively, will assist BYPF to develop into a stable organization. The student consultants recommended that the Board transition from solely a *governance* board, to a *working* Board, at least until BYPF stabilizes. Recommending hiring a part-time associate will allow the daily administrative work to be completed. Deliverables for this tier of the plan included:

- Enhanced organizational chart
- Detailed job descriptions

- Position responsibilities
- New Board of Director committees
- Job description for new part-time Assistant
- Revisions to corporation by-laws
- Amendment to Incorporation Certificate

Financial Structure

The student consultants created the full set of financial statements for BYPF. The BYPF leaders did not have the needed financial tools to evaluate how well each of its programs were doing. A budget was also created to allow BYPF to stay on track and to evaluate costs. Overall the financial statements will help the BYPF leaders make meaningful and informed decisions.

Deliverables for this tier of the plan included:

- Statement of Financial Position
- Statement of Activities
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Budget
- Bookkeeping software analysis
- WaveApps guide
- Credit card rate comparison
- Email marketing system analysis
- Part-time employee cost analysis

Fundraising Strategies

The student consultants designed new fundraising strategies for BYPF. A new fundraising letter was developed that can be used for letter campaigns; different sponsorship levels were created that related to the amount donated. In addition, a grant-writing guide was created for BYPF to refer when applying for new grants. Deliverables for this tier of the plan included:

- Fundraising letter
- Grant writing guide
- Company list – to pursue new grant opportunities
- AmazonSmile Account establishment

Marketing and Branding

With the goal of increasing market awareness of BYPF and its offerings, the student consultants assembled a set of customized marketing processes and tools. It was recommended that marketing software be used to manage the social media platforms. In addition, the student consultants revised the organization’s website so that BYPF can attract more people to join its classes and support its organization. Deliverables for this tier of the plan included:

- HootSuite campaign established
- Website edits
- Market research for New Logo
- Wood model of the New Logo

6 CONCLUSION

There are two goals for writing this paper. *The first* is to tell the story of *Backyard Players and Friends Inc.* The business plan offered this organization not just consulting advice, but an executable turnkey set of solutions focused on its real-world business problem. The goal for Backyard Players and Friends, Inc. is to live beyond its founders and become a 100-year company. The client has expressed deep gratitude for the work product of these student consultants.

The second goal for this paper is to demonstrate one college’s education strategy to help graduate students develop the skills and knowledge needed to lead at an advanced level, but also to develop a disposition toward social responsibility and ethical leadership (Mackenzie, 2017). This is in alignment with the Molloy College mission (Molloy College Mission Statement, n.d.).

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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8 REFERENCES

Bloomberg Philanthropies' Competition Overview, Mayor's Challenge. (2017). Retrieved from <http://mayorchallenge.bloomberg.org/competition-overview/>

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