“Wherefore Art Thou?”: A Campaign to Increase the Awareness and Use of Metro Art’s New Mobile Website, ExploreNashvilleArt.com

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The Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission (www.artsnashville.org), or Metro Arts, is the arts and cultural division of the city of Nashville. Metro Arts seeks to provide leadership to inspire all art aspects of the community by focusing on four areas for community engagement: Artober Nashville, THRIVE Micro-funding Program & Other Artist Development Plans, Poetry in Motion and other special projects. Their most recent project is www.ExploreNashvilleArt.com, an interactive mobile website available to the general public. The website uses your location through a geotagging system that will alert you when you are near public art works in the area. In addition to that, the mobile website also contains information about each piece of artwork. Metro Arts relies on its strong relationship with the community to expose everyone to art in Nashville. A student team in public relations campaign class worked in spring 2015 to promote Metro Arts Nashville and its new mobile website. The team aimed to create more engagement and exposure to Metro Arts Nashville and its new mobile website. Tactics included organizing a convocation event at Belmont University to showcase Metro Art’s efforts. Caroline Vincent, the public arts manager, described their purpose and plans for the future. The success of the awareness campaign will include measurements of attendance of the convocation event, along with other upcoming events to promote Metro Arts Nashville and the community.

SITUATION ANALYSIS: The Metropolitan Arts Commission (www.artsnashville.org), or Metro Arts, is a division of the Metro Nashville Government, dedicated to helping the community participate in their creative interests through public artwork. Metro Arts promotes a creative life and believes “that arts drive a more vibrant and equitable community” for all Nashvillians.

Metro Arts Nashville is a department of the Metro Nashville Government that was established in 1978. Before Metro Arts’ existence, the city of Nashville did not have a formal art community; therefore, Metro Arts was created to help develop the art community. The mission of Metro Arts Nashville is to provide leadership that stimulates and advances the arts to enrich the human experience for the community. Since its founding, Metro Arts has commissioned many art projects that include bicycle racks, sculptures and other public art pieces.

To ensure they are constantly advancing art in the community, Metro Arts has developed different programs that target different sectors of the general public. Metro Arts’ main goal is to advance the arts for the community around them. In doing so, they have committed themselves to constantly enriching the human experience. They are able to accomplish this goal through a variety of different programs such as Artober Nashville, THRIVE Micro-funding Program & Other Artist Development Plans, Poetry in Motion and other special projects.
Each one of these programs serves a different purpose. Artober Nashville, their biggest event of the year, is a month-long celebration of arts and culture in Nashville, designed to inform and inspire the community’s awareness of, and participation in, the array of activities during the month of October. THRIVE is a program that focuses on neighborhood engagement through the use of micro-funding to help facilitate the artistic development of organizations in order to enrich the community around them.

A new initiative of Metro Arts is www.ExploreNashvilleArt.com, a mobile website with on-the-go guides to the Metro Arts public art collection as well as more than 120 Art in Public Places artworks, galleries, museums and culture places. The mobile website includes maps to show art pieces locations and comes with geo-alerts that will alert you when you are near a work of art. Individuals may use it to find pieces of art work whether they are contained within art galleries or in public.

**Problem/Opportunity Statement:** The current priorities of Metro Arts include promoting awareness and use of the new ExploreNashvilleArt.com mobile website featuring the public art collection.

**RESEARCH:** Seven Public Relations, a seven-person team in public relations campaigns class in spring 2015, partnered with Metro Arts to promote awareness of Metro Arts Nashville and the mobile website, ExploreNashvilleArt.com. Seven PR team members met with Rebecca Berrios and Caroline Vincent of Metro Arts to understand the mission and operation of the organization. The team gained insight into what they did, who their targeted publics are and their current challenges and opportunities. The data collected helped Seven PR develop a working foundation for developing and implementing a Metro Arts campaign efficiently and effectively.

**PLANNING:** After numerous discussions based on the needs of Metro Arts and the resources that were available, the Seven PR team devised a three-pronged plan/approach, which would begin Jan. 16 and conclude on April 16. Contained in this approach were measurable impact objectives the team hoped to achieve by the end of the campaign. The primary targeted publics and related campaign objectives, based on input from Berrios and Vincent, were:

- **The Greater Nashville Area**
  - Increase Awareness of “Explore Nashville Art.com”
  - Increase visits to the mobile website
  - 20% increase in traffic
  - Get individuals to post their pictures and use the specific hash tags
  - Online interaction around #explorenashvilleart
  - Online interaction around #whereartthou
  - Increase Awareness of Art pieces in Nashville

- **Belmont University Campus (Students)**
  - Increase Awareness of “Explore Nashville Art.com”
  - Increase visits to the mobile website
  - 20% increase in traffic
  - Get individuals to post their pictures and use the specific hash tags
  - Online interaction around #explorenashvilleart
Seven PR targeted these two publics for two main reasons. Metro Arts had just launched the mobile website a few months prior and had not done much publicity for it. Therefore, the Greater Nashville Area was the perfect target audience because they are the community that Metro Arts seeks to enrich through the art pieces. The second public was Belmont University, specifically the group’s fellow students. Because team members attended Belmont and were well immersed into the campus community, they believed they would be able to produce positive results because of their sphere of influence. Metro Arts had not tapped into the college community yet, so students were the perfect candidates.

In addition to the objectives set for each targeted public, the team set out to achieve an overall public level of change that was based upon:

- Number of unique visits to the mobile website “Explore Nashville Art”
  - Goal: 500
- Likes and reposts on social media
- Number of media hits

Based on these measurable objectives, the team took a three-pronged approach to reach our intended outcome, which was to increase awareness of ExploreNashvilleArt.com

1. Social Media Campaign
2. “Where Art Thou” Convocation Event
3. Student-led Downtown Art Tour & First Saturday Art Crawl

The social media campaign was an ongoing task that lasted over four months and utilized different tactics to increase the overall participation from our targeted publics. Each group member used their own personal social media accounts to do self-promotion to their friends and family. The self-promotion was used for each of the three events that were planned and the student team successfully used different social media outlets such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. In addition to those outlets, Seven PR team members were also granted access to Metro Arts’ social media pages so they could broadcast to their following.

Team members continued using social media to promote the March 16 convocation event on Belmont’s campus, which was led by Caroline Vincent. The event was held at 10 a.m. in LCVA 117. Another resource that was utilized for the convocation event was fliers. Seven PR posted fliers all around campus to get students to attend the culture and arts convocation event. The event’s success was furthered ensured when the team developed a relationship with the art department on campus. This beneficial relationship allowed the group to reach out to art students and get them to come to the event.

To conclude the awareness campaign, Seven PR conducted a social media contest that was paired with a student-led art tour downtown, followed by the first Saturday Art Crawl. This event relied on social media promotion along with the use of fliers. The idea behind it was to post pictures with pieces of artwork using the mobile website, then post them using the hashtag,
The entrees must have posted 3-4 photos correctly using the hashtag and attend the student-led art tour on Saturday, April 4, in order to win a $25 Starbucks gift card.

The measurable objectives of all three events had their own different goals; however, the main goal for all three of them was to increase the awareness of the mobile website.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** The three events were promoted as described in the planning section above. To increase involvement, each event leveraged something beneficial for the individuals involved. The 50-minute convocation rewarded the student attendees with culture and arts credit. The Seven PR team wanted the students to learn about Metro Arts, what they do as an organization, public art in Nashville, and most importantly, explorenashvilleart.com. The social media campaign and student-led art tour were the same in that Seven PR wanted to increase the awareness and get more people involved with the organization and the mobile website. Implementing each portion of the campaign had drawbacks such as deadlines to apply for a convocation room and two scheduled breaks from school. These challenges made it a bit difficult with planning and implementing the events, but the team was able to work around these issues. For each event Seven PR thought through strategies and tactics that they believed would produce the most positive and effective results. The following strategies and tactics were utilized for the campaign.

**Strategy 1:**
- Increase Belmont student awareness and involvement with Metro Arts and ExploreNashvilleArt.com

**Tactics:**
- Metro Arts led an informational convocation event, including posters marketing the event and Metro Arts organization throughout campus. Focus event on ExploreNashvilleArt.com.
- Student-led art crawl. Art crawl focused on Belmont student involvement and direct interaction with Metro Arts’ commissioned pieces and involvement within the greater Nashville community. The art crawl was led using ExploreNashvilleArt.com to emphasize ease of use of the mobile website.

**Strategy 2:**
- Increased exposure of ExploreNashvilleArts.com via social media

**Tactics:**
- Created new posts for Metro Arts to use on their social media platforms specifically about ExploreNashvilleArt.com
- Created social media contest that requires use of the mobile website and social media hashtags to produce more hits

**EVALUATION:** After the conclusion of our campaign, Seven PR evaluated the results from each individual event and the overall success of the entire awareness campaign. The social media campaign is not listed because it did not work off of a measurable impact, rather awareness. Listed below are the measurable objective goals from each event followed by the actual attendance numbers.
• **Objective 1:** To achieve attendance of at least 25 in the March 16 “Where Art Thou” convocation event. This objective was achieved and exceeded, with attendance of more than 100.

• **Objective 2:** To achieve attendance of at least 20 in the student-led tour and art crawl. This objective was not achieved, with attendance of only nine. Students who did participate were enthusiastic about the artwork they saw.

Based on the actual numbers compared to the pre-set goals, the group determined that the awareness campaign was a success. The convocation event was only predicted to draw a goal of 25 people in attendance, but it surpassed that amount by more than four times. The student-led tour and art crawl were aimed at 20 total people, but only received nine. The low numbers could have been a result of the Easter break and holiday, because the event fell on April 4, the day before Easter.

The student group learned what works and what doesn’t work in an awareness campaign. “For example,” one team member commented, “we understand that when one wants to host an event, fliers, word of mouth, and social media promotion via different outlets is most effective. One of the smallest things that worked best in our favor was our campus involvement. Each one of us were involved enough to make people aware enough to the point that even after our campaign had finished, people would still ask us about Metro Arts and exploresnashvilleart.com.” The next lesson learned was that community partners can be amazing to work alongside. Seven PR enjoyed every minute of working with Metro Arts Nashville not only because of Berrios and Vincent, but also because their relationship with them was beneficial. Members of the student team can attest that each and every one learned something new from working with Metro Arts, and gained a deeper understanding and appreciation for the great work they do in the community.

One lesson learned the hard way was that events are not always as successful as you would like them to be. The convocation event set the bar of success that the team hoped to achieve for every event; however, the student-led tour and art crawl were not as successful in achieving attendance. As mentioned earlier, it did fall on Easter break, so that was likely to have put a damper on participation in the event. However, going forward, Metro Arts Nashville can build upon the work Seven PR did and continue to reach out to not only Belmont’s campus, but also other surrounding campuses like Vanderbilt and Lipscomb. Berrios and Vincent said they agree, “Through this process we have learned some different ways that are successful in reaching college students. The Belmont convo was a great opportunity. I think we’ll continue to reach out for these types of speaking engagements, and of course, social media is another way.”

**CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION:** The Seven PR team was able to work together to create a successful awareness campaign for Nashville Metro Arts. The team saw a lack of connection between the college community and the work of Metro Arts. Team members worked with Metro Arts to create events and a social media strategy to target the college audience. Throughout the course of the campaign the team planned and executed three events while also helping to increase Metro Arts’ social media activity. The events reached more than 100 people and created direct involvement between the community and the work of Metro Arts. As Metro Arts moves forward the student team encourages them to continue to use social media and various events to connect with the thriving college community within Nashville.