

COM 223; Team 25: Team Septagon

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Please see our portfolio for examples of all of our work!

Brief Recap:

We chose to support Home Sweet Home Ministries by assisting their fund raising efforts during the 2017 Run for Hope Charity Run. We had originally wanted to develop our own charity run, however just before we submitted our proposal, we became aware that HSHM already had a charity run. As a result, we joined theirs and lent our support in any way we could. We assisted with the charity run in several different ways, from promotion, to parking coordination, to contacting local businesses to see if we could use their parking lots for the event.

Our updated smart goals are as follows.

1. Earn a minimum of \$700 through promotions or increased runner turnout.
2. Have 300 runners participate in the race.
3. Increased runner turnout for the age range of 13-25 by 10%.

We planned to achieve these goals through promoting through local sources such as radio and schools. In addition, we marketed directly to college students to increase participation in that age range.

Implementation:

We dealt with a lot of extreme circumstance during our project. As mentioned we had to scrap our original run idea at the last minute. We then wanted to pursue sponsors through local businesses, however we were later told not to by HSHM. We also were hoping to include a “team” section to the registration of the event (so that we could keep track of which people signed up because of us), however this was later rejected by Fleet Feet.

That being said we feel that we accomplished our goals and helped the event be a success. We did a number of things to make it go well. First we promoted the event through local radio stations WZND and WGLT. We also handed out over 400 fliers around campus. In addition, we were able to market the event to young people through Unit 5 schools, and we also promoted the event through Springfield Area Officials Association, which is a basketball group in the Springfield Area. There were organizations that were receptive, there were many more that we got in contact with that were not.

In addition to promotion, we were tasked by Fleet Feet (on behalf of HSHM) to secure additional sources of parking for the event! We contacted several nearby businesses and confirmed that we could use their lots on race day.

Finally, we helped on race day itself by being the parking coordinators! We planned, and executed the entire parking operation including directing traffic, prioritizing parking locations, and determining capacity. Please see our portfolio so you can see all of our pictures of the event.

Results:

We had some difficulty pinning a direct value on our contributions. To make things simple we only qualified two sources of income, promotional value and volunteer time. As you can see on our portfolio, we secured two avenues of advertisements from WZND and WGLT. Combined, based on information we received these promotions are valued at \$850. Our second form of income comes from our volunteering during the race. There were seven of us who worked two and a half hours each. If each hour was valued at \$10, then this adds \$175. Our total was \$1025!

Obviously this blows through our minimum monetary goal of \$700. Unfortunately we were unable to meet our other two SMART goals. Runner turnout was low and we did not hit the goal of improving turnout in the age range of 13-25 by 10%. We will spell out the reasons for this in the Analysis section.

Everyone contributed quite a bit. Obviously we all participated during the race to coordinate traffic. John used his connections to Unit 5 advertise the event amongst young runners. John also was invaluable as a Liaison for communicating with various groups. Nick Frichette helped by handing out fliers and getting promotions from WGLT and WZND. Blake helped by handing out fliers and researching promotional avenues. Kevin helped by attempting to secure promotional value through Illinois Wesleyan Universities Radio station (was not approved). Josh helped by getting the word out at a local basketball organization he volunteers at, spreading the information to young athletes. Nick Daniels helped by creating our promotional flier and researching alternative avenues of promotional value. Nathan helped by being an outstanding Recorder and handing out fliers on campus.

In addition, all of us coordinated traffic on race day.

Analysis:

Let's start with the positives; We feel that we put a ton of effort into this project. We advertised, promoted, and volunteered hoping the 2017 Run for Hope would be a success. We were able to secure additional sources of advertisement for the race that they wouldn't have otherwise. We also did our best to market the race to young people (a demographic we noticed it had been lacking). We also managed to successfully coordinate parking for over 200 people, which was definitely an interesting experience.

While we do feel that the event was an overall success we did have some failures along the way. The previous few years average runner turnout is around 210-220. This year we only had 175 runners total. There were a number of reasons for this that we have outlined below.

Time: Because we were jumping on to an already existing event, we were pressed for time. By comparison, we hoped to have the original run by April 22nd. In reality, the Run for Hope took place on March 26th. As a result we rushed to find as many promotional venues as we could as well as ensured that we quickly found parking lots willing to help the event. To be completely honest, this may not have been a setback as much as it was a shot of adrenaline. We knew we didn't have a ton of time to mess around and this encouraged us to get right to work.

Unit 5 Push back: John was kind enough to use his contacts with the Unit 5 school district to promote the event to young athletes. The problem was that there were specific rules for IHSA (a school running organization) runners that disallow them from participating in outside events. As a result, even though we were able to get the word out to these kids, they couldn't participate. We didn't have much control over this. It was something that we found out after the fact, and realistically it was nobody's fault.

HSHM denied our requests to seek sponsors: Due to the changing structure of the HSHM organization, we were not allowed to seek sponsors for the event. We had thought this would be an excellent form of fund raising for the event and possibly increase turnout as well, however we were told not to pursue this by HSHM. We respected their decision and made sure not to continue down this path although we did disagree with them. We didn't upset the charity so we followed their wishes. We accepted what they told us at face value and tried to find other ways we could gain income.

HSHM had restrictions to our advertising: The following are two quotes from our HSHM contact, "I am also pleased to hear your main focus is recruitment of runners! It would be tremendous to grow that number because that will be the only source of revenue this year, as you know, we are not soliciting sponsorships for this event. The reason being, we decided last year to no longer host the Run

for Hope as our annual fundraiser because we wanted to move in a different direction with our fundraising events”. The second quote is, “Julie so kindly offered to solely host the event through Fleet Feet and continue to have HSHM as the beneficiary. Therefore, this is no longer our event and we do not want the public to perceive it as an ‘HSHM event’; we are simply the beneficiary (and Fleet Feet is the host). It is very important to communicate this message when publicizing the event, especially because this is the first year HSHM is not involved”. Again, we felt that this was strange, but ultimately out of our control. We were determined to increase runner turnout, and we had to find a way to do this without HSHM support.

Weather: The week leading up to the event the weather was looking like it would rain. According to our Fleet Feet contact, we were told that most runners sign up for an event the week of. As a result, if they saw the forecast they would likely not want to sign up if they knew it would likely rain. You can see how overcast it was in the pictures of the event. Again we handled this problem the best that we could. It actually directly affected us during parking coordination because the ground for one of the lots (and open field outside of the HSHM warehouse) was very muddy. We had to push two cars to get them unstuck because of how bad the terrain was.

Date of Race and Price: Every year since the race’s inception the event has been held on a Saturday. This year it was held on a Sunday. HSHM is a Christian organization. We think this may have had an effect on the number of participants. Again, we didn’t have a ton of control over this, March 26th was the day that Fleet Feet wanted the race to occur and we did our best to accommodate. In addition, the price of the race was somewhat outrageous. The 5K was \$30 and the 10K was \$40. We thought this was a tad excessive and another factor in why turnout wasn’t as high. Again, this price was not set by us.

Course Concepts:

Expert Power: Defined as, “Unique skills [that] make ones person valuable”. This type of power manifested quite a lot in our group. The vast majority of us had no experience with running or being part of a 10K/5K. As a result, we struggled to understand some of the concepts we encountered during the planning phase. We were fortunate however, to have a member of our group that has been a runner for years and was quite knowledgeable in how to operate one. This gave that group member a ton of Expert Power. A great example of this was when we were trying to come up with an effective way to time the race (this was when we were under the impression we would be creating our own charity race). The group member quickly introduced us to the idea of a “Chip Timer” which is a small piece of technology that is capable of tracking when you cross the finish line. Without his experience this project would have been significantly more difficult.

Positive Feedback: Defined as, “[It] reinforces the idea that the behavior should continue”. This is something we as a group tried to instill within ourselves. Whenever we succeeded at something, no matter how small it may have been, we were sure to celebrate. This really instilled a high amount of Social Cohesion within our group, and got us more comfortable with each other. Because of constantly reinforcing Positive Feedback, it got us through the storming phase quicker and got us to actually like one another.

Groupthink/Critical Advisor: Defined as, “A mode of thinking members engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive group, which overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternate courses of action” and, “Group member who constructively criticizes the group’s ideas and decisions”. This was something we dealt with a lot, especially during meetings. Very often we would find each other blindly trusting one another and not really thinking through a problem. Thankfully, we

had a few group members who openly (bluntly) reminded us that we weren't providing anything of substance and were instead just agreeing. This caused us to really be critical of our ideas and improve on them.

Thoughts for future groups:

Home Sweet Home Ministries is undeniably a worthy cause and a great organization. They can be a little demanding and difficult to work with but they mean well. We would recommend you work directly with them through an approved form of fund raising. In addition, we learned that a lot of the time they just need people to help prepare food, move clothes, and other tasks. That may be more beneficial than a small amount of money.

Final thoughts:

We pulled it off! It was bumpy, difficult, tedious, and time consuming but we managed to advertise, coordinate, and help with this race! In addition we made an awesome website to show off all of our contributions! While yes, we didn't hit all of our goals, we still helped promote the race and were responsible for parking coordination during the event! Along the way we learned a lot from one another and developed some strong interpersonal skills.