

Public Relations Campaign for Give Kids the World Village

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Background Information

Give Kids the World Village is a nonprofit organization that gives children with severe illnesses a vacation of their lifetime in central Florida, United States. The village is an 89-acre resort for children and their families to stay in while they visit Orlando's most popular theme parks. The program was opened in 1989 after a young girl named Amy had leukemia and wanted to experience the theme parks in Orlando. Unfortunately, her wish never came true after Amy's travel plans took too long to organize and she passed away. Henri Landwirth, a Holocaust survivor who became a hotelier in central Florida began to offer Make-a-Wish families free hotel rooms in the 1980's. After hearing about Amy's Story, he promised that "no child in need would ever be failed again." Henri Landwirth managed to keep his promise of giving children a magical experience that is worth the whole world when the Give Kids the World Village opened in 1989.

The Village is a colorful and massive resort with 166 villas to allow families a comfortable vacation. Since opening, around 200,000 families have stayed at the village who have been from all 50 of the United States and 77 countries. The Village features 166 storybook villas and a handful of attractions for Make-a-Wish families to enjoy during their stay. Any child who is between the ages of 3-18 and has been diagnosed with a critical illness can visit the Village. Around 250 organizations grant wishes and work with Give Kids the World to organize each visit. In addition, volunteers are the main contributors to making the Village a happy success for every family. Each week of operation, Give Kids the World has around 1,700 volunteer shifts who are placed in different roles around the resort. Due to the number of volunteers, Give Kids the World saves about \$7.3 million every year. Without the compassion and hard work of Village volunteers, fewer wishes would be made possible.

Give Kids the World has managed to continue to be the number one destination for the wishes of children due to their mission “to provide everything these deserving families need to make their visit the vacation of a lifetime.” To continue creating happiness that inspires hope for children and their families, Give Kids the World relies on the support of its donors, sponsors, and volunteers.” The organization is funded by kind corporate and community partnerships as well as individuals.

Related Programs

Give Kids the World is associated with many different organizations to make their goals achievable. The Make-a-Wish Foundation is the most prominent program that works with the Village to help grant any wish imaginable by a child. Additionally, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital also works tremendously to treat ill children and keep them comfortable during the treatments and difficult times. The Ronald McDonald House charity is also a very similar program to Give Kids the World. The House strives to provide a “home away from home” to children and families struggling with medical treatment. Without each organization, children who have been diagnosed with challenging illnesses can still enjoy their youth and make inspiring memories with their loved ones.

Funding

Along with the many volunteers in the Village, Give Kids the World also has countless donors and partnerships. There are three levels of partnerships that companies are categorized in for how much they help with the Village’s mission. For example, Walt Disney World, Universal Orlando Resort, SeaWorld Orlando Resort, and Perkins Restaurant are platinum partners. Gold partners include Hasbro and the Global Association for the Attractions Industry. Lastly, silver

partners are Coca-Cola, Holiday Inn Club Vacations, and Mears Transportation Group. There are also noncorporate partnerships by people or groups who donate funds or their volunteer time.

Digital Presence

Give Kids the World provides almost all their program information on the website. People who access the website can learn the story of the Village, how they can help or volunteer, and media or contact information. The website also includes links to their social media pages such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube where they share inspiring stories and ways for people to take action.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths:

Give Kids the World can continuously provide cost-free vacations for critically ill children and their families. With such an abundance of donors and volunteers, Give Kids the World is financially stable and can accomplish its goals. With partnerships such as Walt Disney World Resort and other central Florida theme parks, the Village has great support and success.

Weaknesses:

A lot of time and effort is required to make every child's wish come true. Give Kids the World must plan each family's vacation, so it goes as smooth as possible. The Village also has a limited capacity which can be disappointing for Wish families. Similarly, after such hardships, families have great expectations for their vacation and sometimes it is not possible for Give Kids the World to make every accommodation. The Village can also experience challenges with their everyday operation. For example, the organization relies on only volunteers and their availability as well as donations and fundraisers to keep them afloat.

Opportunities:

With each visit, Give Kids the World creates happiness, and hope, and changes the lives of families. The organization makes a great impact on the community and the world. They have a vast amount of volunteer, fundraising, and partnership opportunities. For example, a Walt Disney World Resort cast member in Hollywood Studios, at the attraction Toy Story Mania, spends a lot of her time volunteering at Give Kids the World Village. She decided to start volunteering most of her time there after her daughter visited the Village with an illness she has now recovered from. There are many other cast members and Orlando community members who give their time to Give Kids the World. Give Kids the World also has an entire page of fundraising ideas for volunteers to do if they want to help increase funds for the Village. Some of the ideas include sales and games, workplace giving, auctions, marathons, or charity nights.

Threats:

Give Kids the World is responsible for maintaining the village to be safe and well-kept, which can be very costly. If donations or fundraising are reduced, the Village may struggle with its operation. Similarly, the number of volunteers for the Village could decrease in sudden bursts, which would make it difficult to run every guest amenity. In addition, the resort is free and all-inclusive for Wish families, and they work with the theme parks in Orlando to provide them with complimentary tickets. The Village adheres to nearly every need or want of each family, and it requires a lot of planning ahead. These may be considered threats because they have the potential to disrupt the overall mission and routine of the Village. Give Kids the World strives to provide a cost-free vacation for Make-a-Wish families, but they have a lot of threats to avoid making that possible.

Objectives

For the public relations campaign of Give Kids the World Village, I would like to accomplish several different goals. Before moving to Florida, I never knew about the organization and all the wishes that come true for children battling illnesses. I want to increase public awareness of the organization in other states outside of Florida. More people should know about the magic that is created even outside of the Walt Disney World Resort. I also think more Walt Disney World cast members should know about the program and all the volunteer opportunities. In addition, with so much digital use, the campaign will strengthen Give Kids the World's presence online to gain more attention. Overall, the goals of the campaign will be to increase public awareness digitally and gain more volunteers and donations from partnerships.

Audience

The audience of the Give Kids the World public relations campaign will be those who are not aware of the program and cast members at the Walt Disney World Resort. More people who do not live in Florida should be made aware of the Village and its impact to possibly inspire the growth of nonprofit organizations for children battling chronic illnesses. Also, because of the abundance of cast members at the Walt Disney World Resort, more of them should understand the Village and how they can take the extra step to make magic outside of Disney.

Strategies

Objective: Raise awareness of Give Kids the World Village in other areas of the country.

Social Storytelling:

Every family in the village has a different inspiring story to tell. Because there are so many wishes granted every day to children, Give Kids the World can utilize social media

platforms and written articles to highlight more amazing family narratives. The Village utilizes different social media platforms such as Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube. They can also expand their social media use into TikTok to spread the family spotlight video content. Each month, Give Kids the World can film a family story and follow them throughout their week of a fun-filled vacation. The website will also include family stories and have links to social media pages.

Family Programs:

The Village has welcomed families from all 50 of the United States and around 77 countries across the world. To raise awareness about the program in more areas outside of Florida, Give Kids the World can begin different programs for families who have or are currently staying at the village. For example, an alumni family ambassador program where previous village visitors can spread the word about the Village around the community they are from. The ambassador families can act as representatives of Give Kids the World and even help others use their wish to visit the Village. In addition, Give Kids the World will continue to track where each family is from and add any new locations to an Impact Map that is posted on social media and websites for visitors to see.

Objective: Increase Walt Disney World Cast Member Involvement with Give Kids the World Cast Member Storytelling Spotlight:

More Disney World cast members can become involved with Give Kids the World Village through a volunteer storytelling video series on social media. Similar to the spotlight on families who are or have stayed at the Village, cast members who have donated or volunteered with Give Kids the World can share how they have been positively impacted by volunteering their time with the Village. The videos can also be posted on Walt Disney World's social media

accounts with a lot of cast member followers. Not only will more cast members learn about the volunteer opportunity but cast members who actively volunteer could learn more about other ways to play a larger role in the Orlando area.

Cast Member Program Opportunities:

Another strategy to receive more volunteer applications from cast members is to partner with Walt Disney World for different volunteer programs and to help spread the word of the program. Cast Life is a resource for cast members to view their schedule and access many other resources across the Disney company. A tab on Cast Life is known as the VoluntEAR program that shows all the chances for cast members to volunteer at organizations. Cast members have a busy schedule and by creating an opportunity for them to support a generous cause while also earning opportunities for themselves, the number of volunteers at Give Kids the World can increase.

Tactics

1. Social Media Family Story Video: Film a different family each month and highlight their story on social media. Include parts of their vacation and what they enjoyed most about Give Kids the World Village.
2. Publish Family Stories: Along with a video on social media each month, also write up an article highlighting the family's story and publish it on the Give Kids the World website.
3. Family Ambassador Program: Recruit families who want to be an advocate for Give Kids the World in their communities and on digital platforms.
4. Unified Hashtags: Use hashtags on social media posts and encourage families or volunteers to do the same.

5. Create an Impact Map: Design a map that shows every location inside and outside of the U.S where a family who has visited the Village was from and refer to it on the website and social media.
6. Disney's Volunteer Orientation: As new cast members are trained, highlight the VoluntEAR program and opportunities with Give Kids the World.
7. Cast Member Volunteer Rewards Program: Partner with Disney to create a volunteer rewards program for cast members to participate in as they give their time helping at the Village.
8. Cast Member Volunteer Spotlight Series: Film different volunteer experiences that cast members have had and post them on Give Kids the World and Disney's cast member social media pages.
9. Flyers in Cast Member Breakrooms: Showcase the volunteer opportunities in the cast member breakrooms on flyers or television and include a QR code for them to learn more.
10. Adopt a Family Program: Offer a cast member initiative in different locations of Disney World for them to team up and support a specific family's week vacation,

Evaluation

After completing the campaign for Give Kids the World, the strategies and tactics used were detailed and effective. The objectives of the campaign were to increase national awareness of Give Kids the World Village and also increase the Walt Disney World cast member volunteer involvement with the nonprofit organization. To achieve both goals, there were several strategies with defined tactics. I decided to use social media for both objectives because it is such a widely

used tool that so many people spend their time on. Because Give Kids the World has a presence on social media already, they can highlight visiting families and volunteer cast members through short videos. The Village can encourage users of social media to spend less time scrolling on their phone, and more of their time supporting a good cause. In addition, the family ambassador program and cast member rewards program are strategies that provide incentives for both parties. The tactics were implemented by each objective and had a mix of events, social media ideas, and programs. Successful tactics included the social media spotlights on families and on cast members, the family ambassador program, the impact map, adopt a family program, and the announcements in cast member breakrooms. However, attempting to encourage Disney World to create another rewards program for cast members on top of the one they already have was not successful.

Overall, the campaign was successful as Give Kids the World has a larger outreach than it did before, and it has gained more volunteer cast members. The success of my campaign was measured by the number of interactions on each social media post, the number of wishes granted from new areas, and how many cast members volunteered. I enjoyed creating new ways for such an amazing nonprofit organization as Give Kids the World to continue to be successful and grow. However, it was difficult to think of the best possible tactics to support the strategies of the campaign. I would have liked to have visited the Village in person, but I was very helpful to have spoken with a former family and current cast member volunteer at the Village.

Give Kids the World PR Campaign

The implementation of these campaign strategies will greatly benefit the nonprofit organization Give Kids the World Village and help them receive more donations and volunteers to continue making an impact in the lives of families all over the world. With more help from people all over

the country and the globe, as well as the help from local Orlando community members such as Walt Disney World cast members, Give Kids the World will continue to grant hope in the lives of children and their families.

References

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Where Happiness Inspires Hope. Give Kids the World Village, www.gktw.org/start.php.