THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF ADVERTISING/PUBLIC RELATIONS

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A DIALOGIC MARKETING TOOL FOR NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY ON THE PENN STATE IFC/PANHELLENIC
DANCE MARATHON (THON)

KELSEY E. BONSELL
SPRING 2013

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for a baccalaureate degree
in Advertising/Public Relations
with honors in Advertising/Public Relations

Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Dr. George Anghelcev
Assistant Professor of Advertising/Public Relations
Thesis Supervisor

Dr. Susan M. Strohm
Senior Lecturer of Advertising/Public Relations
Honors Advisor

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

This study advances our understanding of the strategy that nonprofit organizations use to employ social media as a marketing tool. The goal is to create a social media guide for nonprofit organizations. The guide will be based upon research conclusions and will provide social media strategies to foster a community. A case study was conducted on The Pennsylvania State University's student run philanthropy and nonprofit organizations: The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON).

Interviewing those who ran THON's social media network sites and investigating involved students' views of the official accounts allowed the development of suggestions and recommendations for the use of social media as a marketing tool. It was found that the kind of content published on social sites greatly impacts how successful followers feel the social media platforms are used. In regards to involvement with the official THON social media accounts, the length of involvement, age and leadership positions affected the level of interactivity. The results of this study will advance THON's social media marketing strategy as well as advise similar philanthropies and non-profits in creating and advancing their social media marketing strategies and goals.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Here is to the start of my trail.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The Evolution of Marketing

Consumer marketing has gone through three strong phases in its brief history (Tariq and Wahid 1049). The first phase, which brought about the start of advertising products to consumers, took place in the late 1950's and extended through the 1960's and was driven predominantly by manufacturers (Tariq and Wahid 1054). During the first phase, manufacturers reached consumers through mass media channels. The effectiveness of advertising campaigns was strongly correlated to their media budgets (Schultz and Schultz 26).

In 1970, the second phase of marketing started. During this phase marketing was driven primarily by retailers. According to Schultz and Schultz, retail began transforming to regional ventures. Computerized sales and magnetic-strip cards, including bank and credit cards, allowed marketers to easily and instantly capture information from consumers. The retailers had "closer relationships (with consumers) and more information than their marketers or suppliers" (Schultz and Schultz 14). The power switched to the hands of the retailers who had the authority to pick which products to put on the shelves and where to put them.

In 2000, consumer marketing entered a third phase, "influenced by the increased role of information technology (IT) in consumer lifestyles which has led to a consumer dominant marketplace". Marketing transitioned to a stage where, currently, consumer convenience, interactivity, technology, consumer wants, and open conversation between buyers and sellers all influence how marketing goals and strategies are developed (Schultz and Schultz 15). The main characteristic of this third stage is ongoing consumer involvement with brands through social media platforms (Tariq and Wahid 1054).

From the beginning, researchers have been preoccupied with finding ways to assess the effectiveness of media platforms in reaching their consumer base. The current transition to social media platforms requires a reconsideration of the principles used to assess the effectiveness of media channels.

Assessing the Effectiveness of Media

Three "Laws of Media" in marketing have been identified in order to assess the value of a media platform in reaching consumers (Tari Wahid 1055). The first, Sarnoff's law, states that the value of a broadcast network is proportional to the number of listeners or viewers. "A network with 100 people is therefore 10 times as valuable in terms of reach as a network with only 10 people" (qtd. in Tariq and Wahid 1055). However, Sarnoff's law only addresses one-way media platforms, i.e. static one direction communication platforms from the sender to the receiver: examples are television and radio. The law addresses communication from one-to-many.

Metcalfe's Law (1980) addresses two-way telecommunication between two individuals. The law states that the value of a network increases by the square number (n) of users in the network: n^2. "Therefore, a network with 100 users is worth one hundred times more than a network with 10 users" (qtd.in Tariq and Wahid 1055). The law accounts for interactive exchanges between people. An example of this law can be illustrated with telephones. Having only one person with a phone does not have value, but the value of every additional phone added to a network increases by the number's square. The total number of people with whom that additional person may send and receive calls from increases (see Figure 1-1). Metcalfe's law has a flaw in that it includes two-way communication without accounting for communities and groupings (Tariq and Wahid 1055). In the current marketing environment, based strongly in the introduction of the internet and later, social media, there is proven interactivity between groups,

communities and subgroups which allows communication in more than just two directions at once (Ewald**,** Tariq, and Wahid 1055).

Reed's Law, "The Law of the Pack" (2001), addresses not only the inclusion of two-way communication, but also group formation within those networks:

"Let's say you have a GFN (group forming network) with *n* members. If you add up all the potential two-person groups, three-person groups, and so on that those members could form, the number of possible groups equals 2^n" (Reed 1).

When originally postulated, Reed differentiated his law in terms of the difference between one-to-one and many-to-many communication. "With Reed's law in comparing a network of 10 people, the difference in the utility of a network of 100 people is equal to 2 raised to the 90th" (Tariq and Wahid 1055). This law addresses communication from many-to-many and assesses the value of communication methods such as the social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter.

Solis (2013) defines social media and the transformation to a world of many-to-many communication as " the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers."

According to Solis, the move to many-to-many communication platforms has transformed people from content readers to content publishers. It shifts from the old one-to-many broadcast model to a many-to-many model rooted in conversation (Solis). Reed's law, as opposed to the two previous laws, accounts for the value of community and group forming platforms in regards to spreading and sharing messages through a network.

What is important to take from Reed's law is the exponential growth that comes from the use of social media platforms. Many-to-many communication, most often found on social media, has the largest potential for message dissemination. 65% of US women and 52% of US men use group forming social media platforms daily (Mintel International). Because of this unmatched power to disseminate information, social media has become an integral and necessary part of the marketing mix.

Social Media in Marketing

Emergence of Social Media

Social media technologies use the collective intelligence of people (Tariq and Wahid 1056). Social media became popular in the 1990's with the release of sites including Six Degrees, MoveOn and BlackPlanet (all niche social sites). The year 2000 brought about Wikipedia, 2001-Friendster, 2003-MySpace, 2004-Facebook, 2005-YouTube, and in 2006, Twitter was released (Edosomwan et al. 81). Currently, the most popular social media sites are Facebook and Twitter (Mintel; Duggan, Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project).

Facebook

Facebook was founded in 2004 (Duggan, Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project). As of March 2013, it is estimated that Facebook has 1.06 billion monthly active users (Smith). Research by the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 72% of American females (aged 18 or older) and 62% of American males (aged 18 or older) use Facebook as of December 2012. The average Facebook user has 229 friends on Facebook and specifically users in the 18-34 year old age group have an average of 318.5 friends (Duggan, Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project). Currently, people turn to Facebook for sharing personal

news, keeping updated about connections/community, battling boredom and "stalking" or finding out about people from their past (listed in order of importance) (Chitika Inc.).

Twitter

Twitter was founded in 2007 (Duggan, Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project). As of March 2013, it is estimated that Twitter has 500 million total users and 200 million active users (Smith). Pew Internet research found that 15% of American females (aged 18 or older) and 17% of American males (aged 18 or older) use Twitter as of December 2012. The average Twitter user has 126 followers (Duggan, Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project). Currently, people turn to Twitter for news (over 50% of users), information about celebrities and entertainment, technology and movies/TV (listed in order of importance) (Chitika).

Other Social Networks

Pew Internet's research study (2012) found that 13% of females check Instagram and 6% of male users check Instagram. It was also found that 25% of American females (aged 18 or older) use Pinterest (15% of the total population uses Pinterest). Females are five times as likely as males to use the Pinterest platform (Duggan, Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project). Smith (March 2013) cited 100 million active users on Instagram, 200 million active users on LinkedIn, 250 million users on Tumblr, 39 million users on Viddy, 48.7 million users on Pinterest and 1 billion users on YouTube with 4 billion views daily.

Social Media for Brands

All current social media platforms allow brands, companies, products and or businesses to represent themselves on the internet alongside personal individual accounts. These branded pages are created to directly relate to the target consumers. Presently, online social media brand presence supersedes or works to bolster brand's static websites (Thackeray et al. 336). Traditionally, brands solely used HTML coded web pages, i.e. static websites. Static websites present unchanging information, meaning the site is only updated periodically and requires a web developer to change what the site shows to the public (Men and Tsai 3). The static website shows the exact same information to all of its visitors. According to research, static websites try to target three main publics: media, investors and customers **(**Thackeray et al. 336; Rybalko and Seltzer 2**)** as opposed to social media, where the consumer takes precedence. Social media has become not an alternative, but a complimentary function to static websites. The business' social media sites are driven by user-participation, interaction and user-generated content. It provides a way for users and consumers to become involved in organizations (Waters et al. 105).

Social media is very unique in its viral method of sharing information throughout networks. Social media provides the ability to build an online community, which can extend through multiple platforms. Within marketing efforts, social networks are an "important public relations tool, which helps companies create dialogues with their publics. Social media is characterized by user- generated content, which has been found to be more effective than traditional marketing communications in influencing the attitudes and behaviors of other users" (Men and Tsai 1).

The technology involving social media is constantly changing, evolving and expanding. Because the platforms are still in the growth stage of their lifecycles there is a lack of research on how to best use social media to promote brands.

Academic research, thus far, has focused on the interpersonal implications of social networking, not practical application of information, which leads to a great variance in the use of social networking and tactics to engage stakeholders (Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton 2). Specifically, in the nonprofit sector, studies done by Greenberg and MacAulay (2009), Bortree & Seltzer (2009) and Waters, Burnett, Lamm and Lucas (2009) all concluded that social media sites were broadcasting messages, not fostering dialogue, resulting in lost opportunity (Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton 2). The fundamental communication advantage afforded by social media platforms is dialogic communication.

Dialogic Communication in Social Media

Dialogic communication is interactive, conversation driven communication in which a relationship exists between the users and the brand or between users and users. Dialogic communication does not necessarily mean the two or more parties involved must agree; it can include the discussion and negotiation of a topic. Taylor and Kent (1998) examined how organizations used the internet to build relationships via two-way dialogic communication (Rybalko and Seltzer 4; Briones et al. 2). Five principles were created in order to help organizations build open communication with publics (Rybalko and Seltzer 2; Briones et al. 2):

1. Ease of interface and navigation

2. Conservation of visitors on the site

3. Generation of return visits via content updates and or incentives

4. Providing useful and tailored information to a variety of publics

5. Maintaining a dialogic loop through opportunity for feedback

In the current market, dialogic communication within social media could include: allowing and asking for feedback on products, responding to questions, concerns or ideas posed by consumers, interactive polls, contests or asking questions. The important part is to keep the conversation active allowing consumers to build a strong relationship with the organization. Redbox, the movie and gaming rental company (toting over five million likes on Facebook), is a brand that has a dedicated social media response team to interact with their consumers. For example, on average it only takes Redbox one hour and thirteen minutes to respond to a comment posted on their Facebook page (see Figure 1-2) (McCrea). The brand regularly posts contests including circus tickets and movies for a year (see Figure 1-3). Redbox constantly asks for consumer input by asking questions i.e. "Did you see Gangster Squad this weekend? What did you think?" (see Figure 1-4). On average Redbox responds to 62.6% of all of the comments that consumers post on their page (McCrea). A dialogic relationship relies purely and simply on dialogue. Another benefit from the open communication is that there is feedback from consumers. Figure 1-5 (in Appendix A) shows an example of a customer thanking Redbox publicly on their page for their commitment to their customers and the comment also received "likes" from other customers who also visited the page. The comments from consumers are entwined within the brand's public relations and marketing strategy from the start. This allows a constant exchange of ideas and the possibility of improvement for the business' page as long as there is adequate resources dedicated and committed to the maintenance of social media platforms (Kent and Taylor 325).

Taylor, Kent and White (2001) found that many organizations are not using the internet in a dialogic manner. Bortree and Seltzer (2009) reported similar findings in terms of blogs and social networking sites. They recommended that, "organizations need to adhere to Taylor and Kent's (1998) principles by responding to posts and providing useful information" (Briones et al. 2). Kent (2008) focused on blogs and the results that can be achieved by providing a dialogical

loop with their followers: issue framing, relationship building, fostering trust and company identification.

Most research done on online dialogic relationship management shows that with proper use, social media can be used to develop relationships. Social media provides a connection with key publics that lead to outcomes such as increasing the number of stakeholders and interactions, which grows the organization's network (Rybalko and Seltzer 5; Briones et al. 1; Bortree, Sevick, and Seltzer 319; Kent and Taylor 331).

Strategies for Using Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Social networks are a way to humanize an organization, which presents the brand on a personal level and is bolstered by key words like becoming "friends", "liking" and "following" (Men and Tsai 2; Kent and Taylor 323). With the creation of a social media strategy to obtain marketing goals the most important part is the construction of a trusting, active and informed community. Similar to the principles created to enable dialogic communication, researchers have identified three essential strategies for using social media as a marketing tool on the internet (Men and Tsai 5; Waters et al. 103):

- Disclosure or Openness
- Information Dissemination
- Interactivity and Involvement

Disclosure or Openness
Disclosure is the willingness of the organization to participate in open conversation with the consumers and market. It is an effort to build trust and provide transparency as an organization—not hide anything from the publics. By providing a description of the organization,

history, mission, goals, and direct hyperlinks to the web site with other visual clues such as logos

it establishes the connection between the brand, their online presence and their social media

accounts (Men and Tsai 5; Waters et al. 102-103). It must be made clear that the social media is

being run by the brand with consistent branding and information.

Information Dissemination

Companies must address the needs, concerns and interests of publics while disseminating

organizational information (Men and Tsai 3). The sites have to be useful or people will not visit

them, let alone frequent them. Consumers are interested in multimedia content so it is important

to post a mix of photos, videos and promotions along with the informational posts/tweets in order

to keep consumers engaged and interested, yet informed (Men and Tsai 7; Waters et al. 104).

Interactivity and Involvement

Interactivity and involvement are directly correlated to dialogic communication. Along

with the research from Kent and Taylor (1998), Jo and Kim (2003) found that in order to develop

relationships with stakeholders, interactivity is a requirement for organizations (Waters et al.

103). Again, social networks hold an advantage over the traditional website due to their

foundation in the basis of interactivity. Providing questions to spark discussion, answering

questions and concerns from consumers and creating contests are just some ways to provoke

interaction—however, the more organic the conversation, the more transparent the organization

seems.

The lack of findings, combined with the differing goals associated with social media

marketing plans, hinders the creation of a sole marketing plan guide and or strategy for businesses

to follow.

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

The marketing mix (McCarthy 1960), a concept describing the important aspects of marketing, is often referred to as the 4 Ps of marketing and includes: product, place, price and promotion. The 4 Ps are used to address all parts of the marketing mix when assessing, advertising and selling a product.

Advertising, personal selling, public relations, publicity, direct marketing and sales promotion are all promotion elements. Promotional activities are described as Integrated Marketing Communications, more commonly referred to as IMC. IMC is the standard that organizations follow in order to properly communicate with their target markets (Mangold and Faulds 359). IMC allows companies to create a unified message and achieve the set out company goals.

> "To accomplish the campaign's objectives, the elements of the promotion mix are carefully coordinated so the information transmitted to the marketplace through these elements consistently communicates a unified message that broadly reflects the organization's fundamental values" (Mangold and Faulds 358).

It is easy to see that most, if not all, of the elements of the IMC plan are affected and influenced by the emergence of social media. This requires social media to be addressed in marketing plans in order to fully achieve goals. The problem that agencies, brands and companies are running into is how to combine the more traditional media forms (print, broadcast, radio) with social media and digital forms of promotion in order to create the most successful IMC strategy. With the lack of research on the impact of social media promotion (other than reach statistics) it is hard to provide protocol for budget distribution amongst the different media forms (Mangold and Faulds 359; Greenberg and MacAulay 74; DATA STRATEGY 41).

Interplay between Traditional and Social Media Platforms: IMC in the Age of Social Media

Given consumer need for immediate access to information and the on-demand nature of new media, "consumers are turning away from the traditional sources of advertising: radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. Consumers also consistently demand more control over their media consumption" (Mangold and Faulds 360). In the current market, people are even online while watching television adding an even more complicated twist and the need to examine questions such as: "When somebody is on Facebook (while watching a television program), are they watching the TV commercials in that program?" (DATA STRATEGY 41).

Many claim that "the mass media is dead" is an overstatement, but it is imperative to come to the realization that changes in media are shaping and are being shaped by new forms of social organization in the form of social media ventures (Greenberg and MacAulay 66). Reed's law and the many-to-many media environment has replaced the former "top down dissemination technologies" (Greenberg and MacAulay 66) which have, historically, been the way that consumers have received messages. Completely dropping traditional media from an advertising and marketing campaign, at this time, is not beneficial for the company (Mangold and Faulds 360; Greenberg and MacAulay 66; DATA STRATEGY 41). Conversely, the importance of focusing on building a strong social media presence, as well as a budget to support such ventures, is becoming a requirement in today's media atmosphere.

Content

In regards to online content, the marketer cannot directly control social media conversation or consumer messages unlike the direct control associated with traditional media. It is possible for companies to, in part, influence the conversation without direct power by combining traditional media campaign facets (top down dissemination) and prompting consumers on social media (Mangold and Faulds 361). Along those lines, social media is a mixed bag of

media in itself. It supports static and moving visual and audio formats, links, posts and

attachments. By being able to extend traditional advertising and promotion campaign pieces in

any format on the web, social media acts as a bridge to expand upon all forms of campaign

media.

Consumer generated social media also acts as product reviews for companies by allowing

consumers to speak freely, positively or negatively, about the product. The Mintel 2012 Social

Networking—US survey showed that 90% of consumers trust peer recommendations more than a

product description or a company comment when looking to buy a product. For example, Redbox

consumers freely speak about the company's products on the social media sites. Even when the

consumer isn't satisfied, Redbox finds ways to correct the mistake showing other consumers their

immediate response and dedication to providing the best possible product. The online interactive

aspect of the marketing campaign can provide the final information consumers need to close the

sale and have the IMC go full circle. Figure 1-6 (see in Appendix A) shows an example of a

Redbox consumer describing their issues with a product on the Redbox company Facebook page.

Redbox addressed the issue minutes later and followed up via email almost immediately

according to the consumer's testimony.

Budget

Timing and frequency of information is very hard (currently, near impossible) to track on

social media, which causes companies to become wary of the benefits of using social media

without hard data (DATA STRATEGY 41; Melton and Hicks 500-501). 2010 Venturenneer data

(see chart below) showed that 42% of nonprofits spent less than 5% of their media budget on

social media that year, 42% spent 5%-24% on social media and only 16% spent over 25% of their

budget on social media marketing. The data also suggested, in regards to their social media

budgets, that "nonprofits using social media will increase their concentration on social media by

60% in 2011 as compared to 2010" (Stengel 32; Figure 1-11; Figure 1-12). Because of the fact

that the majority of companies have increased social media budgets, along with the percent of

their total budget, companies must invest in social media for the benefit of staying competitive

and visible.

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Hours Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	21	12	11	4
5%-24%	49	58	43	51	50
25% +	28	21	45	38	46
Median (Excluding 0)	16	13	20	21	24

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	20	15	15
5%-24%	49	55	53	48
25% +	28	25	32	37
Median	16	14	18	20

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	23	18	27
5%-24%	49	39	56	57
25% +	28	38	26	16
Median	16	21	15	13

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raise	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	12	15	12
5%-24%	49	54	50	58
25% +	28	34	35	31
Median	16	19	19	18

Social Media as an Element to Enrich Campaigns

Social media acts as the perfect medium to enhance traditional marketing (Mangold and

Faulds 361; DATA STRATEGY 41; Melton and Hicks 501). In 2010, Old Spice rolled out their

"Old Spice Man" campaign that was simultaneously launched with a monitored and invested

social media campaign. Starting as a humorous TV ad, the campaign then made the jump to social

media where users talked about the ads and began making spoof videos following the traditional

flow of information—traditional media content which consumers then take online (DATA

STRATEGY 41). Five months after the first ad's debut, the marketers (Wieden & Kennedy) used

promoted hashtags on Twitter. Followers on Twitter and Facebook as well as users on Reddit,

Digg and YouTube began to interact with the Old Spice Man. They also reached out to other celebrities and used those individual's followers on social media to help harness the campaign online. They continued the cycle of interaction by posting personal video responses from the Old Spice Man on all forms of social media—a truly interactive, dialogic experience (Vaynerchuk 124).

The campaign was a success with sales that "rose sharply--by 55 percent--over the three months following the first aired TV commercial, then soared by 107 percent around the time the response videos began showing with a reported 11 million impressions on YouTube" (Vaynerchuk 123). The Old Spice campaign is a calculated example of how social media was used to enhance and extend a traditional television spot and increase sales. The campaign has gone down in recent advertising history as a model for future endeavors barring one aspect: post campaign social media. Only 23 tweets were sent from Old Spice's Twitter account in the two months after the campaign and none of the tweets interacted with consumers or thanked them (Vaynerchuk 126). After a large investment in gaining followers it is important to keep the community engaged and interactive.

Pete Markey, a marketing director at More Than said, "Traditional marketing—at its most basic the four Ps—is not compromised by social media, rather it is enriched by it "(DATA STRATEGY 41). Old Spice is the perfect example of incorporating social media in a way to heighten and evolve a campaign with interplay between traditional and social media. There are drawbacks to the strategy widely that there is no playbook for success (DATA STRATEGY 41; Melton and Hicks 494; Elliott B03). The relationship between traditional and social media is not one that is defined universally but it is a relationship that universally needs to exist.

Social Media Use and Integration by Nonprofits

In 2010 Ventureneer and Caliber conducted a survey of 891 nonprofits to find best practices about social media and to assess the use of social media as a marketing tool in nonprofit fundraising initiatives. Venturenneer organized the nonprofit data into 4 categories: number of hours spent weekly on social media, the length of time the nonprofit has used social media, the size of the organization (in amount of money raised) and the purpose of using social media: fundraising, advocating or cause marketing.

The research found that only 2% of nonprofit organizations do not use social media at all within their marketing plan. More than half (52%) of nonprofits spend less than four hours a week participating in social media. Trends in the research also showed that the larger the nonprofit (the more money the organization makes/raises) the longer the organization typically spends using social media (the highest category that the survey researched was 10 million+ a year). The chart below shows the percentages of nonprofits that use each of the forms of social media as well as how effective they find the different media forms. It is important to note that Facebook and Twitter are the most used of the media forms, with 96% and 78% of usage respectively, and rank high when it comes to effectiveness of the platform.
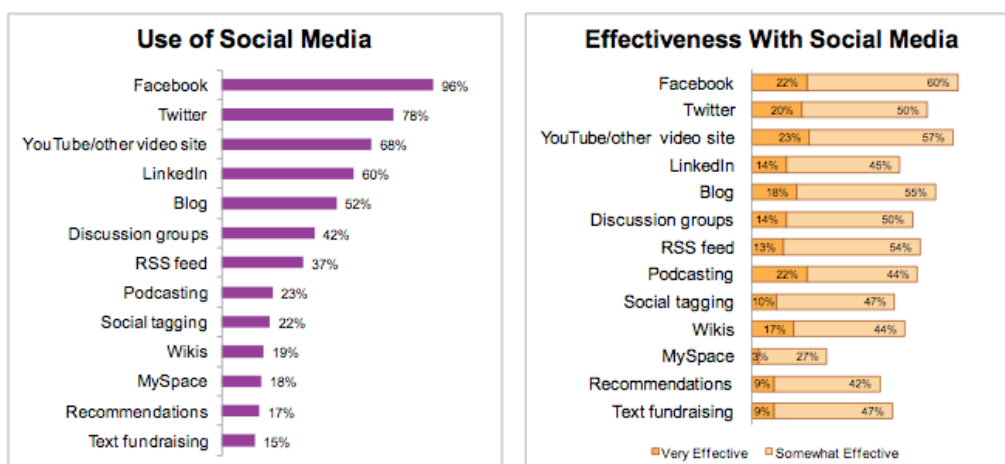
Unfortunately, there is a lack of guidance of how companies should properly use social media to systematically fulfill their goals. Of all nonprofits, 91% take it upon themself to learn how to use social media by jumping in and learning by doing and 82% learn by observing what others are doing (see Figure 1-7). Less than half attend classes (47%), social media conferences (26%) or hire an expert on social media (15%). By neglecting resources and experts in the field, nonprofits are losing out on all of the benefits social media can provide for their organization. Nonprofits use social media for a variety of reasons, but it is important for the organizations to use the platforms to create a dialogic based community above all of their other goals. Luckily, 76% of nonprofits use social media to build and maintain a community and 92% use it to maintain and build awareness of the organization itself (see Figure 1-8). In order to build a strong community it is important to be active, interact daily and to address the issues of the consumers. Only 39% of organizations say that they tweet or retweet on Twitter daily. That number is very low with the nature of Twitter and the knowledge that it is important to show social media presence daily in order to reach the target audience (see Figure 1-9). As one would guess, the more hours spent using social media, the longer an organization has been on social media and the more the organization receives in donations, the more friends, followers and connections they have (see Figure 1-10).

84% of nonprofits spent less than a quarter of their marketing budgets on social media in 2010 (see Figure 1-11). Surprisingly, organizations that raised 10 million+ had the least amount of their budget going to social media marketing. The projected increase in budget toward social media efforts is a positive change in marketing strategy with nonprofits realizing the necessity of social media in their IMC plan. The data shows that 84% of nonprofits believe that their efforts on social media are integrated with other communication platforms (see Figure 1-13). A good predictor of an organization adopting an IMC model that integrates social media with the other communication platforms is the length of time the organization has been using social media.

The obvious came through in Venturneer's research showing that with more time spent using social media, the more years using social media and the larger the size of the organization the more that the organization benefits using the online platforms. However, there is room to grow when it comes to the goals of using social media as well as the integration and budget distribution for social media to help nonprofits get more out of the social networks.

Nonprofit use of Facebook

A study done in 2009 by the communications department at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC addressed the use of Facebook for nonprofit organizations. Facebook profiles of 275 nonprofit organizations were examined to address how the site was being used by the nonprofit to advance their organization's mission and goals (Waters et al. 103). The study evaluated organizations' disclosure, information dissemination and involvement; all proven characteristics necessary to create a beneficial social media strategy (Refer to **Strategies for Using Social Media as a Marketing Tool** section; Men and Tsai 6; Waters et al. 105)

Disclosure items in their evaluation included: a description of the organization's programs and services, an organizational history, the mission statement, the organization's web site, the logo and a listing of administrators of the profile. Information dissemination items in their evaluation included: links to news items, photographs, video and audio files, posted announcements and links to press releases and campaign summaries. Involvement items in their evaluation included: providing methods to contact, donate and volunteer for the organization, as well as the use of message boards, a calendar of events and including an e-commerce store (Waters et al. 103).

Of the evaluated disclosure items, 97% of the nonprofits listed their administrators, 96% provided a description of the organization, 81% linked back to their website and 71% used their

logo. The Facebook profiles were lacking when it came to including a mission statement (43%) and a history of the organization (22%).

Of the evaluated dissemination items 74% use the Facebook wall as a discussion board, 56% post photographs and 54% provide links to external news stories. However, all of the other facets were only used by under 50% of the nonprofits: news announcements (44%), video files (24%), summaries of campaigns (20%), press releases (5%) and audio files (1%).

Of the evaluated involvement items, 71% of the organizations provided email addresses with 37% of them being a direct person and 63% going to a generic email (ex. webmaster@nonprofit.org). Less than half of the organizations included the other involvement items: message boards (44%), a way to donate (13%), listing volunteer opportunities (13%), a listed organizational phone number (9%), a calendar of events (8%) and an e-commerce store on their profile (1%).

Disclosure items were by far the most utilized by the nonprofits. The nonprofits were very successful in being transparent but the interactive nature and community building benefit of social media was overlooked and not used to their full potential. The study also showed that the nonprofits lacked the resources of time and money to pay attention to their Facebook page, which led to inactivity on the site. Many of the nonprofits turn to college interns and volunteers to manage their sites instead of a paid employee who is more knowledgeable of the platforms and knows what is the most beneficial for a nonprofit (Waters et al. 105-106).

Nonprofit use of Twitter

A study done in 2011 by the communications department at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC (NCSU) addressed the use of Twitter for nonprofits by randomly examining 27 of the top 200 fundraising nonprofits in the US. There was also a study done in 2009 by Lovejoy,

Waters and Saxton, which examined the top 100 largest nonprofits, 73 of which had a Twitter account.

NCSU focused on the four models of public relations to interpret the use of Twitter in their study by coding tweets for a month. The four models of public relations are as follows:

- Press agentry- the use of researched persuasion and manipulation to influence audience to behave how the organization desires usually through emotion
- Public information model- the use of one way factual communication to distribute information
- Two-way asymmetric model- the use of persuasion and manipulation to influence the audience to behave how the organization desires without finding out how the stakeholders feel about the organization
- Two-way symmetrical model-the use of communication to negotiate with the public, resolve conflict and promote mutual understanding of the organization

The results showed that nonprofits used public information the most of the four models; the communication of one to many. Public information made up 34.13% of the tweets, press agentry 27.07%, two-way asymmetry 22% and two-way symmetry made up 10.02%. Primarily, nonprofits shared their own information on Twitter which was made up of 54.7% of all tweets. The tweets were broken up as follows: 23.8% of the tweets shared upcoming dates and deadlines, 24.3% lead followers to the nonprofits' website, 20.3% to their blog, 13.2% to their newsletter, 9.9% to a news release, 9.2% to research findings, 9.2% to a picture, 6.6% to a video and .7% to annual reports (Waters and Jamal 323).

When it comes to two-way conversation, organizations were more likely to use asymmetrical communication over symmetrical (dialogic) conversation. Only 25.5% of tweets used the "@" symbol to directly talk to a user and 8.3% of tweets were used to resolve conflict.

However, only 8% of tweets were used to engage in ongoing conversation on Twitter. "Rather than capitalizing on the interactive nature and dialogic capabilities of the social media service, nonprofit organizations are primarily using Twitter as a means of sharing information instead of relationship building" (Waters and Jamal 323).

Lovejoy, Waters and Saxton's study also interpreted tweets for a month for 73 nonprofit organizations. The study intended to see whether Twitter's communication tools were actively being used by nonprofits and to see what forms of communication the organizations were using. Information dissemination (one to many) was the primary kind of material shared on Twitter. The tweets that were recorded "were more likely to contain hyperlinks (68%) or hashtags (29.9%) than they were to contain messages that were public replies (16.2%) or retweets (16.2%)" (Lovejoy, Waters, and Saxton 5). The conclusion of the study was that nonprofit organizations are using Twitter to relay information using one-way communication instead of using the site to interact with others through public messages or retweeting.

CASE STUDY: THE PENN STATE IFC/PANHELLENIC DANCE MARATHON (THON)

The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON)

The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (more commonly known as THON) is a yearlong fundraising and awareness campaign for the fight against pediatric cancer. The year's fundraising effort culminates with THON Weekend— a no sitting, no sleeping forty-six hour dance marathon held annually in February (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon). THON weekend takes place at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park Campus in the Bryce Jordan Center (located on campus).

The yearlong efforts of THON are fully student run. THON's mission statement is: "to conquer pediatric cancer by providing outstanding emotional and financial support to the children, families, researchers, and staff of the Four Diamonds Fund" (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

The Four Diamonds Fund

Charles and Irma Millard established the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital in 1972 to honor their son Christopher who passed away from cancer (Fighting Pediatric Cancer). The Four Diamonds Fund gets its name from a story Chris wrote, while ill, where he named four diamonds (courage, wisdom, honesty and strength) that he deemed necessary to overcome cancer. "The Four Diamonds Fund provides outstanding support to children and families by (covering costs after) insurance, and funding research performed by a team of Pediatric Oncologists at the hospital" (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

The Four Diamonds Fund works to offset the cost of cancer treatment that the families' insurance does not cover, as well as other expenses that may affect the welfare of the child. The Fund also supports pediatric cancer research at the Four Diamonds Pediatric Cancer Research Institute as well as supporting the medical team who cares for the children at the Hershey Medical Center (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon). Families who are supported by the Four Diamonds Fund are called "Four Diamonds Families". The Four Diamonds Fund has never turned away a family in need of help. In 1977 the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Medical Center became the sole beneficiary of THON (Fighting Pediatric Cancer).

Milestones in THON's History

1970's

THON first began in 1973 headed by a group of Pennsylvania State University students as a way to give back to the community (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon). The first THON, lasting only 30 hours long with 78 dancers in the Hetzel Union Building Ballroom, raised $2,136 for the Butler County Association for Retarded Children ("THON through the years"). Dancers competed to spend the most time on the dance floor and to raise the most amount of money. The weekend ended with only 17 dancers still standing ("THON through the years"). Prior to aligning with the Four Diamonds Fund in 1977, the money THON raised was given to a different charity ever year (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon). 1976 was the first year THON had a theme (Dance for those who can't)— a tradition that has been continued since then. In 1979 THON Weekend was moved to The Mary Beaver White Building for more space. "Also new this year, dancers no longer competed against each other. Instead, their shared goal was to remain standing for the entire duration of the event" ("THON through the years") which has remained THON Weekend's goal.

1980's

According to the Penn State Alumni Libraries, in 1980 there were 396 dancers who participated in THON Weekend. THON broke the 6-figure mark in 1983 raising $131,000 for the Four Diamonds Fund. The following year, The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon was named the largest philanthropy of its kind. It was not until 1988 that Penn State's annual marathon was named "THON" ("THON through the years").

1990's

In 1992, THON raised over one million dollars in one calendar year. Then in 1999, due to size, THON moved to Rec Hall with a record 638 dancers ("THON through the years").

2000's

703 dancers participated in THON 2003; the first time the number broke 700. THON leaders made a huge commitment in 2004 when they, "pledged to contribute $10 million during the next six years to build the Pediatric Cancer Pavilion at the Hershey Medical Center" ("THON through the years"). In 2006, the first webcast of THON allowed viewers in over 30 countries to watch the events throughout the weekend. 2007 brought about the following changes that THON still follows today: THON Weekend was moved from Rec Hall to The Bryce Jordan Center, 708 dancers participated throughout the weekend and it became a 46-hour marathon (two hours less than it had been the previous 33 years) ("THON through the years").

2010-2013

There was record traffic to THON.org in 2010. 2010 was also the year that the majority

of THON social media accounts were created and monitored. In 2012, THON broke the ten

million dollar mark raising $10,686,924.83 for the Four Diamonds Fund ("THON through the

years"). 2013 marked the 41st THON with a total of $12,374,034.46 raised and the organization

also hit the milestone of raising over $101,000,000 total for the Four Diamonds Fund since the

start of their partnership in 1977.

Volunteer Structure of THON

As the largest student run dance marathon in the world, THON's has a very calculated

internal structure. Penn State students can get involved in THON by being a part of the leadership

committee structure or through the organization structure (or both). The leadership committee

structure is involved in planning all aspects of THON Weekend and other THON sponsored

events through the year. It is the leadership committee structure that keeps THON running day to

day. The other way students can get involved is through one of the fundraising groups for THON,

which fall under THON's organization structure (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

A chart of THON's leadership and organization structure can be found at the end of the **THON**

Organization Structure section.

THON Leadership Committee Structure

Students involved in the leadership committee structure are in charge of all of the

directorial and logistical details involving THON Weekend, all THON related events and all daily

tasks regarding THON and relations with the Four Diamonds Fund. Leadership roles are chosen

through interviewing and the structure is distributed as follows (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic

Dance Marathon):

- The Overall Chairperson*: This person is in charge of all of the 14 Committees involved in the leadership committee structure. He or she is in charge of interviewing and picking the Overall Committee.

- The Overall Committee*: This group is made up of 14 individuals also titled "Overalls". Each of these Overalls is in charge of leading a specific Committee of students in this structure. The 14 Committees are: Communications, Donor and Alumni Relations, Entertainment, Family Relations, Finance, Hospitality, Merchandise, Morale, OPPerations, Public Relations, Rules and Regulations, Special Events, Supply Logistics and Technology.

- Captains*: This group is made up of 320 individuals. Captains fall in to one of the 14 specific Committees and are leaders in the THON community chosen by the Overall Committee to help fulfill THON's mission through the year through the planning all of THON's yearlong events and happenings. Many of the Captains are in charge of their own Committee.

- Committee Members*: This group is made up of 3,400 individuals. Committee members are chosen and lead by Captains. Committee members are chosen for a specific purpose by Captains to fulfill THON's mission.

Here is an example of the leadership committee structure through all levels within one of the committees, Public Relations. The Overall Chair person is in charge of the Public Relations Overall. The Public Relations Overall is in charge of 21 Public Relations Captains. Public Relations Captains' job is to be the "voice of THON to those outside of the Penn State Community at the local, state and national level" (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon). Six of the 21 Captains have Committees that, in total, make up 70 Public Relations Committee

Members.

The number of Captains, if a Captain has a Committee and the number of students on a Committee varies based on the needs of that specific aspect of THON. Responsibility and power is distributed in a top down model and the inclusion of 14 different Committees allows specialized involvement throughout the organization (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

However, it is important to note that there will be a change to the position titles starting for THON 2014. "The Overall Committee will be called the Executive Committees. THON will now be lead by an Executive Director and 14 Committee Directors. This change allows THON to continue being as professional as possible to our growing number of supporters" (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

*Within THON nomenclature Overall Chairperson, Overall Committee, Captain, Committee and Committee Member all begin with a capital letter.

THON Organization Structure

Students involved in the organization structure of THON are groups that fundraise for THON. Organizations are split in to six categories: Greek organizations, special interest organizations, general organizations, commonwealth campuses, special mission campuses and independent dancers (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

- Greek organizations: Fraternities and sororities on campus who fundraise for THON as part of their activities. Fraternity and sorority pairing started in 1974; when a sorority and fraternity work together to raise funds. There are 85 Greek organizations that participate in THON.

- Special interest organizations: Organizations that were founded for the sole purpose of participating and fundraising for THON. There are 21 special interest organizations that participate in THON.

- General organizations: Organizations that were founded for reasons other than THON however, they also help to fundraise for THON. There are 250 general organizations that participate in THON.

- Commonwealth campuses: Students at Penn State campuses other than University Park who help to fundraise for THON. There are 19 commonwealth campuses that participate in THON.

- Special mission campuses: Students at any of Penn State's Special Mission Campuses (ex: Penn State Hershey Medical Center). There are four special mission campuses that participate in THON.

- Independent dancers: Students who choose not to align with any of the above organizations. Students may fundraise in groups of two in the hopes of being chosen as dancers for THON weekend.

Students who are a part of THON's leadership committee structure many times are also a part of THON's organization structure. In total, more than 15,000 students volunteer for THON efforts each year. Combined, the structures work to provide financial support as well as direct support and interaction with the families affected by pediatric cancer. See the chart below created by The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon highlighting the structure of THON.

THON™
Leadership Structure

OVERALL CHAIR
Chairperson who oversees the operations of all 14 Committees and chooses the Committees' Chairpersons.

OVERALL COMMITTEE (14)
Chairpersons who oversee the operations of each of the 14 Committees, and who choose the Captains of each Committee. The 14 Committees include: Communications, Donor and Alumni Relations, Entertainment, Family Relations, Finance, Hospitality, Merchandise, Morale, OPPerations, Public Relations, Rules and Regulations, Special Events, Supply Logistics, and Technology.

14 COMMITTEES
Students who assist in the planning and running of THON events.

ORGANIZATIONS
Recognized Penn State organizations that participate in and fundraise for THON.

CAPTAINS (320)
Captains are hardworking and motivated leaders in the THON community. They are chosen by the Committee Chairpersons to assist in the planning of THON events and fulfillment of THON's mission throughout the year.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS (3,400)
Committee Members play a key role in helping THON fulfill its mission of conquering pediatric cancer. Chosen and led by Captains, Committee Members help to plan for and attend THON events.

COMMONWEALTH CAMPUSES (19)
Any of Penn State's Commonwealth Campuses.

GREEK (85)
An organization recognized by one of the four Greek Councils: the Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, Multicultural Greek Council and National Panhellenic Council.

GENERAL (250)
An organization recognized by Penn State that has a primary reason for existence other than THON, but chooses to participate in THON.

SPECIAL INTEREST (21)
An organization recognized by Penn State that was founded for the purpose of participating in THON.

INDEPENDENT DANCERS
A pair of students who fundraise for one THON year in hopes of entering the lottery and being awarded with dancer spots for THON Weekend.

SPECIAL MISSION (4)
Any of Penn State's Special Mission Campuses.

Fundraising Structure of THON

Fundraising Efforts

The THON structure allows students to solicit funds in a variety of ways, which is monitored and approved by the Overall Committee. The types of fundraising are as follows, as defined by The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon:

- Business solicitation: This category includes contacting a company and asking for a corporate donation. These contacts go through Captains who then help the organization contact the business.

- Canning: THON determines three designated canning weekends where students can solicit funds in large metal cans. Students travel all over the region (through several states) to different cities and towns to collect donations at intersections and in front of storefronts.

- Canvassing: At any time during the fundraising season students can go door to door soliciting money for THON.

- THONLine Fundraising: Organizations can send out emails to donors, which directs them to an online donation function.

- THONvelopes: Students can send individual letters to family and friends in order to solicit donations for their organization. THON provides the letter writing materials to students.

- Alternative Fundraising Events: This category encompasses all fundraising other than the other five forms set by THON. THON Captains must approve these fundraisers before organizations are allowed to participate (Ex: receiving a portion of sales at a local sandwich shop).

Events and Programs Through the Year

THON is constantly adding events, activities and programs from year to year to further

involve and support the Four Diamond families and or raise funds to support the Four Diamond

Fund. Because THON is a yearlong effort, events happen at all times during the academic year.

Below is a list of the annual events according to The Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance

Marathon:

- Adopt-A-Family –matches a Four Diamond family with an organization.

- THON Four Diamonds Recycling Effort (THON 4DRE) –helps to raise money for the

  Four Diamonds Fund and better the planet.

- THON Raffle Sale –helps to raise money for the Four Diamonds Fund by rewarding

  winners with donated gifts.

- Hair Donation Benefitting Wigs for Kids –a program which creates wigs for children

  who have lost their own hair.

- THON 5K –3.1 mile run/walk that supports THON, also includes a kids run for Four

  Diamonds Children.

- 100 Days Til' THON- a celebration of THON Weekend occurring in 100 days; the event

  encourages student involvement.

- Family Carnival- event for Four Diamonds families where kids play games and do crafts;

  event is run by Captain Committees and organizations.

- Spirit Week- a week with various activities including ice-skating, bowling, and band

  performances.

- Road to THON Celebration- formal dinner which is used to thank THON donors,

  supporters and volunteers.

- Dance With Us!- a way for supporters around the world to participate in THON by learning a song and dance (line dance) which will be performed during THON.

- THON Weekend- 46 hour no sitting, no sleeping dance marathon. There are constant activities and events that go on through the weekend.

Student Involvement

It is estimated that approximately 15,000 Penn State students participate in THON every year. Based on the 84,578 student enrolment at Penn State in 2012 (including 20 campuses, 4 special mission campuses and excluding World Campus Students), 17.7% of students are involved in THON (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon; Enrollment, Fall Semester 2012). Many of THON's events occur at Penn State's University Park campus with University Park campus students making up the largest percent of THON volunteers. If only the number of students at the University Park campus were examined, approximately 33.6% of students would be estimated to be involved in THON (based on 44,679 students enrolled at the University Park campus) (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon; Enrollment, Fall Semester 2012).

Summary of Fundraising Activities

Including the 2012-2013 fundraising season, THON has donated over $101 million dollars to the Four Diamonds Fund (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon). In the 2012-2013 fundraising season, Penn State students raised over $12.3 million dollars.

The THON Summary of Fundraising Activities for the 2011-2012 THON fiscal year reported that THON donated 96.06% of all dollars raised to the Four Diamonds Fund. "According to the American Institute of Philanthropy, the most highly efficient philanthropies donate 75 percent" (Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon).

Research Questions

Based upon the literature review, the lack of a social media guide for nonprofit organizations and the importance of dialogic communication via social media the following research questions were created. First, it was important to trace the history of the THON social media accounts since their conception. By speaking to those who run the accounts it was possible to grasp the "voice" of the official THON accounts. It is important to know how the organization (the individuals running the social media accounts) is utilizing the resources provided by social media platforms. Begging the question:

RQ 1: How does the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) use social media as a marketing tool to leverage a supportive and an active community?

Next, with previous research focusing on the three strategies to use social media as a marketing tool (Waters, Richard D., et al. 2009), as well as the five principles for open and dialogic communication (Waters, Richard D., and Jia Y. Jamal 2011; Lovejoy, Kristen, Richard D. Waters, and Gregory D. Saxton 2012), it was important to investigate how the targeted publics felt THON adhered to the strategies and principles. Hence, the next research question:

RQ 2: Do people involved in Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) uses the strategies of social media marketing as well as the principles for dialogic communication on social media?

Lastly, the goal of the research is to create a way to enrich THON's current social media goals and methods in order to better the accounts and social media impact. The research will not only give insights for THON but other similar nonprofit and philanthropic ventures. Through finding areas of improvement and opportunity along with research about THON's target audience's social media usage, a guide will be created for THON leaders to supplement the lack of guidance in the industry. This creates our final research question:

RQ 3: What opportunities are there for the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) to better use social media to reach their constituents and create a strong online community?

RESEARCH METHOD: INTERVIEW

Interview Introduction

Comprehensive interviews were conducted with past and current THON leaders from the years 2009-2013. The leaders chosen for interviews were or are currently connected directly with the management of the official THON social media accounts (specifically Twitter: @THON and Facebook: Penn State Dance Marathon Like page). Interviews were utilized to better understand the THON social media accounts from when the accounts were started to THON 2013. By choosing to interview people deeply connected with the THON social media accounts qualitative information was collected, which was pivotal in the creation of the second level of research; a survey of students involved with THON. Participants were recruited and scheduled for interview time slots via email. IRB certification was received to perform the study.

Participants

There were six interviews conducted. The survey subjects included: one person representing THON 2010, one person representing THON 2011, two people representing THON 2012 and two people representing THON 2013. Participant's THON roles were one of the following: Overall Chairperson, PR Overall, or Social Media PR Captain.

Procedure

Implied informed consent forms were emailed to all participants. The form explained the purpose of the study, procedures, duration, the right to ask questions, a statement of their voluntary participation and a release of confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in person or

over the phone. One participant typed the answers to the questions. There were 28 questions that made up the interview with follow up questions added as needed. The information collected was then investigated for specific themes in relation to the information found in the literature review.

Interview Summary

Interviewee 1: PR Overall THON 2010

Interviewee 2: PR Social Media Captain THON 2011

Interviewee 3: Overall Chairperson THON 2012

Interviewee 4: PR Social Media Captain THON 2012

Interviewee 5: PR Social Media Captain THON 2013

Interviewee 6: PR Social Media Captain THON 2013

The THON social media accounts:

Access and Posting

The participants discussed the fact that the individuals who have access to monitor and to post on the social media accounts change every twelve months with the selection of new positions. Since the onset of the Twitter and Facebook accounts there has been two PR Captains whose job is titled "Social Media" Captain (Interviewee 1). The specific person who posts or tweets as well as the individual's responsibilities has changed every year. Interviewee 1 and 5 discussed the fact that different people do different types of media and they do not double up on responsibilities.

Training

A commonality among those interviewed was that there was no training when they took the position: "We kind of made it up as we went along" (Interviewee 4). All of the people who

were interviewed spoke about lack of guidance and support but they all mentioned using past reports from predecessors, their own judgment and experimentations and inspiration from other organizations.

Final reports include what had worked in the past and a rough outline of events to be covered throughout the year on social media however there is no set template for final reports. Interviewee 1, 3, and 5 mentioned that they looked at other big philanthropies and nonprofit organizations to see what worked for them and tried to mimic their actions. Specifically Interviewee 5 examined Facebook and Twitter sites of Alex's Lemonade Stand, The American Cancer Society, Penn State Hershey Medical Center and Susan G. Komen For the Cure. She examined the kinds of posts, what generated the most buzz for the organizations and if there was anything on their sites that was applicable for THON to share. Interviewee 1 looked to Livestrong's Twitter account and Interviewee 3 also mentioned monitoring Alex's Lemonade Stand as well as the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and SU2C.

Interviewee 2 mentioned that the Social Media Captains in 2011 ran training seminars for other Captain Committees and Committees that explained how to use personal social media accounts in regards to THON. To take strides in advancing THON's social media, Interviewee 5 plans to create a social media strategic report as well as social media guidelines at the end of her 2012-2013 term to pass on to further Captains.

Platforms Used

As previously mentioned, the THON Twitter account began in the summer of 2009 and the current Facebook "like" page was also transitioned in 2009. The YouTube account started before 2009 but is not run by the Public Relations Captains. The THON blog was piloted in 2010. By THON 2012 FourSquare, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest and about.me were added. In regards to the THON 2012 fundraising season Interviewee 4 mentioned: "Twitter worked better with a lot

of gained visibility and students had a larger response to it. Facebook was also good for students and parents, though older people seemed to interact with the page the most." Interviewee 3 mentioned that the fan page on Facebook was pivotal during the events of the Penn State Sandusky Child Sexual Abuse Scandal as a crisis management tool. As of THON 2013, THON has added a LinkedIn company page, Instagram, Storify, a blog on THON.org, Vine, Viddy and an improved Google+ account connected to THON.org (Interviewee 5, Interviewee 6). Below is a table of the amount of followers and "likes" as well as the growth of the official THON accounts over the last two years.

Date	Followers on Twitter	Increase from previous year	"Likes" on Facebook	Increase from previous year
July 6, 2011	11,155	---	32,988	---
April 12, 2012	20,265	9,110 (81.68%)	38,812	5,824 (17.65%)
February 15, 2013 (start of THON weekend)	26,396	---	44,757	---
February 18, 2013 (end of THON weekend)	28,515	2,119 (8.03%) **Increase during THON weekend**	48,356	3,599 (8.04%) **Increase during THON weekend**
April 1, 2013	28,642	8,377 (41.34%)	48,895	10,083 (25.98%)

Time Spent

The answers varied on how much time was spent when it came to running the social media accounts due to the positions and responsibilities variability year to year. Everyone spent at least 15 active hours per week running the accounts and many more hours were spent monitoring (from spring when they received the position through the following spring when new administrators are chosen). Every year, there was an average of two people running the accounts. Interviewee 5 mentioned that she believes that she, alone, spends upwards of 40 hours per week running the accounts currently.

THON's use of social media marketing:

Budget:

Every person interviewed mentioned that there was a $0 marketing budget for the social media accounts (THON 2010 - THON 2013).

Interviewee 4 and Interviewee 5 spoke of THON investing in the marketing and PR knowledge of Fleishman-Hillard (A public relations and integrated marketing firm out of St. Louis Missouri). In 2013 the firm helped with the promotion of specific initiatives. Items including paid posts were covered in the fee paid to Fleishman-Hillard. Interviewee 5 stated: "The decision as to where the money goes comes from Fleishman-Hiller". Also mentioned were meetings that the PR Overall and Overall Chairperson have with the firm regarding public relations and strategy. Repeated attempts to get in contact with the Overall Committee to ask questions about the aid and cost of Fleishman-Hiller went unanswered. However with more investigation, Interviewee 3 did say that when she was the Overall Chairperson in 2012 the work from Fleishman-Hillard was an investment from donor that wishes to remain anonymous in regards to his/her donation amount and name.

Other Promotion:

THON uses local promotion efforts such as flyers and signs for campus events. Local State College, PA radio stations QWIK Rock and B94 donate radio segments (sometimes as often as weekly) and specifically the Philadelphia television station 6 ABC has created commercials and aired coverage of THON weekend. Interviewee 3 stated in regards to 6 ABC: "In return for coverage, we would do "like" drives to create traffic to their Facebook page." Similarly in 2013, 6 ABC did a follow drive in which they donated 50 cents for ever new follower to their account (Interviewee 5).

Interviewee 3 mentioned that a 400 level Information Technology class experimented with Google AdWords as part of their class requirements and they worked to promote THON. The AdWord advertising was a donation from Google for the class's purpose.

In September 2012 a documentary titled, *Why We Dance: The Story of THON* was released and aired on public broadcasting networks throughout Pennsylvania, DC and New York. The advertising, the commercials and the airing of the documentary itself acted as unpaid promotion (Interviewee 5). Interviewee 6 mentioned that they tried to mention everything going on with THON on the social media accounts including "like" drives, the airing of the documentary as well as local promotions.

Tracking Impact:

From the onset, the available tools were used to look at analytics (Trendistic.com and Google Analytics in 2010) and the amount of likes and followers were documented. Shortened links (bit.ly and go.gl) have been used since the 2012 THON season to track the amount of clicks on specific posts. Interviewee 6 said they use the shortened links to monitor traffic and help decide what time of the day is the best to post, although they realize are many other variables when it comes to getting people to click on links.

The amount of followers and "likes" were recorded every day by THON 2012 Captains, which was reduced to weekly by THON 2013 Captains. Interviewee 5 will suggest to THON 2014 Captains to only check bi-weekly as she believes it is too much unnecessary information to record.

Using social media to build dialogic relationships with publics:

Every interviewee shared that THON had a goal to post and tweet at least once daily to stay active. Each year Captains set different goals "I tried to tweet 5 times minimum a day, but

wouldn't hesitate to do more, especially on an event filled day" (Interviewee 2). It was mentioned that Twitter almost always posted more often to keep up with the pace of the medium and stay relevant and interactive.

When it came to answering posts or tweets from the community, Interviewee 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 all agreed that they did their best to address questions or comments posted to THON on social media, positive or negative in nature. However, it was impossible to respond to every comment or tweet. Specifically Interviewee 4 said that if it was something that could apply to a large group of people they would post about it but if it was a personal question they would answer them directly. Interviewee 2 shared that, "Keeping followers actively engaged was a goal of mine".

"THON Social Media Community Guidelines" were created in 2013 to protect THON and the integrity of the Facebook "like" page and can be found in the "About" section on THON's Facebook page. One of the rules states: "Comments will be removed if they contain: Profane, defamatory, offensive or violent language" (the rest of the Guidelines can be found in Appendix F).

Goals for using social media:

Content goals:

Specifically in 2013, a rough daily social media editorial content calendar was created when the new Captains received their position in Summer 2012. Captains go over the week's content and finalize the topics prior to the start of the week. However, all of the ideas are fluid so if something unplanned arises the content can be changed (Interviewee 5).

Defining goals of the accounts:

Interviewee 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 mentioned that first and foremost, the goal of social media for THON is to increase awareness for the organization. Secondarily, Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2 brought up that they use the social media accounts to make THON interactive and to build an active community. Disseminating information and informing users of THON's mission were also important goals for those who ran the accounts. All of those who were interviewed agreed that fundraising was never the primary focus for the social media accounts.

Barriers for using social media to build relationships:

At the start of using social media the learning curve was the biggest barrier due to the limited number of organizations using the sites at the time. Interviewee 4 brought up that the accounts could possibly be different with formal training or a marketing budget to make things run more smoothly but also mentioned that it could possibly take away from the student run aspect of THON.

Getting lost in the large amount of content of social media makes it a challenge to differentiate organizations online (Interviewee 3, Interviewee 5). Interviewee 2 mentioned that you cannot please everyone or reach every audience on social media. It requires the administrators to pick a target for social media content or the audience will be lost because the content is too general or broad. By doing so, you are not able to get everyone in the community involved with the cause. Interviewee 3 said that she was always worried about "spreading too thin" with social media and not being managed to the best of the capabilities of THON. Interviewee 5 had the same worry:

"There are a lot of social media platforms and they (THON) are keeping all of them active and not posting to the best of their abilities on all of them. Every social media

presence should be exactly what they want people to think of THON and we need to make sure none of them are lacking."

In Interviewee 5's believes it was partly the cause of the way the positions were split up (currently one person runs both the Twitter and Facebook accounts) to which she is suggesting a change for next year. Other setbacks include: no way for people to subscribe to the THON blog, the static nature of the THON blog (no comments, interaction, have ever been posted to the THON blog) and the THON Twitter is not a verified account. The verified status would help the account's clout and reliability on social media (Interviewee 6).

Recommendations for using social media to build relationships:

The biggest recommendation/change that those interviewed mentioned was making sure the focus stayed on creating an engaged community:

"I'm not as pleased with the current tweets, it has become too 'marketing' oriented as opposed to community based" (Interviewee 2)

"I think that a philanthropy that is as emotionally charged as THON is should have social media platforms that are representative of that. Yes, we do want media attention and we want for THON to be able to grow, but it all began with a community and having a social media presence that reflects that is important. This year, I feel as if I am seeing less of a social media presence and it is more of a "press release" type of feel. (Interviewee 4)

"Getting followers to feel more engaged by reposting or retweeting what other say is really important." (Interviewee 3)

The suggestion to have all of the THON accounts working with similar content to keep them integrated was mentioned. Interviewee 5 mentioned that it would be helpful to have focus group meetings for all of the people who run the accounts to create an even bigger impact with all of the accounts staying on the same page.

Using research to learn about social media was brought up by multiple participants with an importance in keeping up with trends, finding out how organizations are using social media. Setting goals at the beginning of every new set of social media administrators was deemed important to guarantee the growth of THON on social media.

Interview Themes and Implications

Themes	Implications
Rapid position turnover and lack of training and supportive materials	A simple guide of all of the social media accounts and how to properly use them should be created to supplement the final reports the new administrator receives. The Captains also need to read up on current social media trends in addition to the reports they receive. Because there is such rapid turnover, it is important to keep consistent in online content so that the community finds trust in the social media accounts. Final reports should be standardized in order to follow and track trends from year to year.
Spread too thin, not enough effort given on all social media platforms	A redistribution of the position duties should be set in place and then kept consistent from year to year. Possibly the addition of a

	third Social Media Captain to run the less important platforms (i.e. Pinterest) could lessen the work load as well as allow the creation of more targeted and varied content on all platforms. Because Twitter and Facebook are the most used platforms it is more logical to have one Captain assigned to each. Redistribution would allow all of the THON accounts to more accurately represent and portray THON to the community.
No budget	If it is still true that the work of the PR firm (Fleishman-Hillard) is a donation, there is no money dedicated to running and promoting THON social media accounts. Also, administrators of the social media accounts have little to no knowledge of what the firm is doing to help the accounts. It is important for the administrators to be aware and educated by the firm about strategy and content especially since there is money being invested (even if it is not specifically THON's money). It is estimated that in 2011 50% of nonprofits as large as THON spent 5-24% of marketing budgets toward social media marketing and 0% of nonprofits had no social media marketing budget (Ventureneer). To keep up with the trends in nonprofit social media marketing THON should invest more money in a social media marketing budget in order to stay relevant on crowded social media platforms.
Interactive communication with THON community	All of those involved with the THON accounts mentioned that they tried to communicate with the community. This is very

	beneficial for THON to build relationships with their follower base. Creating active and engaging communication should be a goal that is passed down and maintained by THON in the future.
Number one goal of social media accounts: raise awareness	92% of nonprofits that are THON's size or larger also mentioned that building awareness was the goal of their social media accounts (Ventureneer). Building an active community needs to be added as primary goal of the THON accounts. Reed's law highlights the benefits of group forming to spread information. By focusing on building a larger community, the content on the accounts is then spread exponentially. When the primary goal is building an engaged community, awareness is still successfully achieved and becomes a beneficial byproduct.
Recommendations: better relationship building	The accounts have taken a more marketing/press release strategy in 2013 and it is important to transfer back to a communication model. Based on their past experiences with the account, those interviewed specifically recognize the need to engage the THON audience in a better way. It is important to mirror the emotionally charged and energetic philanthropy on THON's social media accounts.

RESEARCH METHOD: SURVEY

Survey Introduction

A quantitative survey was created based upon the themes brought up from interviews as well as the literature review found in Chapter 1. A survey was used to gain information from those involved with THON in any capacity. The goal of the survey was to identify beliefs, awareness and opinions within the active and involved audience. IRB certification was received to perform the study.

Participants

There were 275 people who took the survey. Participants who took the survey were, on average, 21.5 years old. Of those who took the survey, 25% were male and 75% were female. There were 258 people out of those surveyed who have been involved with THON in any capacity who then completed the rest of the survey. Individuals were involved with THON for an average of 3.23 years. Over half of the participants are not part of the leadership structure (56.98%). Committee members made up 35.27% of the survey population (See Chart 4-1 in Appendix E).

In regards to student involvment in the organizational structure of THON, the largest percentage of students (30.62%) who took the survey are a part of a special interest organization. The second most common involvement was being part of Greek organization (21.71%) followed by general organizations (17.05%) (See Chart 4-2 in Appendix E).

Procedure

The survey was created using Penn State's authorized version of Qualtrics survey software. Skip and display logic was used in order to receive the most accurate results. Demographics questions were asked to get an understanding of the users involved in THON's social media community. The extent and types of social media use were surveyed to find the most active platforms. Content focused questions were used to determine what specifically stimulated users and where they learn about THON. Dialogic relationships were examined using the three essential strategies for using social media as a marketing tool as variables. The survey concluded with open-ended questions allowing users to voice their concerns and opinions about THON. For a full list of questions please see the attached questionnaire in Appendix D.

The survey was a total of 44 questions.

The survey was promoted through social media (Facebook and Twitter). Students strongly involved in THON were contacted through emails and Facebook messages and asked to pass the survey through their organizations. Thus, a snowball sampling method was used.

Descriptive Statistics

Social Media Use

1. Respondants check Facebook 9.53 times daily on average (SD: 8.83) and Twitter 8.1 times daily (SD: 10.85). Instagram is checked 9.32 times weekly (which amounts to 1.33 times daily) YouTube is checked 5.82 times weekly and Pinterest is checked 4.17 times weekly. Foursquare, Vine, Flikr, Storify and Viddy all are checked less than one time a week (See Chart 4-3 in Appendix E).

2. Average number of friends on Facebook: 806.05 (SD: 360)

   Average amount of time user has had Facebook: 5.85 years (SD: 1.3)

   Average number of followers on Twitter: 160.45 (SD: 172)

   Average amount of time user has had Twitter: 2.06 years (SD: 1.5)

3. Of those surveyed 100% have and check a Facebook account and 82.95% have and check

   a Twitter account.

4. The following chart shows what device users use to check social media platforms:

Platform	Computer	Cell Phone	Both (Equal time)	Do not check at all
Facebook	33.33%	12.79%	**53.88%**	0.00%
Twitter	10.08%	**42.64%**	30.23%	17.05%
Instagram	0.00%	**54.65%**	6.59%	38.76%
LinkedIn	32.17%	3.49%	3.49%	**60.85%**
Pinterest	38.37%	6.20%	9.69%	**45.74%**
YouTube	**78.29%**	3.49%	14.73%	3.49%
Foursquare	0.00%	12.02%	0.39%	87.60%
Google+	19.77%	0.39%	2.71%	**77.13%**
Tumblr	22.09%	2.33%	4.65%	**70.93%**
Blogs	28.29%	0.78%	4.26%	**66.67%**
Flickr	6.59%	0.00%	0.39%	**93.02%**
Storify	0.39%	0.00%	0.39%	**99.22%**
Viddy	0.78%	0.39%	0.00%	**98.84%**
Vine	1.16%	3.49%	0.00%	**95.35%**
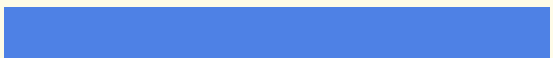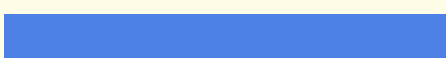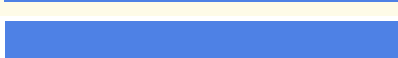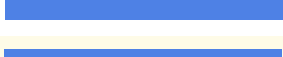
5. The average surveyed individual describes himself or herself as a social leader. The

   average user falls between "agreeing" and "somewhat agreeing" that their friends turn to

   them for social advice (See Chart 4-4 in Appendix E).

Audience Opinion of THON Social Media

6. When it comes to stimulating interest in THON, four topics were rated successful or higher (successful=5, very successful=6): posts about individual children who benefited from THON (5.48), posts including compelling videos (5.39), posts about a family affected by cancer/family stories (5.27), posts including compelling pictures (5.22) (See Chart 4-5 in Appendix E).

7. THON social media accounts are the third most important way that survey users say they receive information about THON. THON organizations that people are a part of are the most important way that they received information about THON (See Chart 4-6 in Appendix E).

8. The following chart shows the methods that proved important when it came to getting someone involved with the THON social media accounts:

Method to get involved with THON social media accounts	Level of importance (1-10)
THON weekend	8.18
A THON organization you are a part of	7.76
Tweets, posts, retweets or share that you saw about THON	6.85
Friends	6.75
Overall, Captain or Committee	5.69
State College New Source	5.14
Internet search or search on social media platforms	4.55
Penn State Alumni	3.88
TV news or advertisement	3.42
Radio news or advertisement	2.62

9. The following chart shows what percent of those surveyed remember seeing each kind of content on the THON social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter combined):

Answer		%
Photos		95%
How to donate to THON		88%
Retweets or shares		83%
Videos		81%
Facts about the cause (ex: cancer facts)		81%
Quotes		72%
How to get involved		67%
THON's mission		60%
Hyperlinks		46%
Questions directed to THON's friends/followers		42%
Post to join a hashtag		42%
Press coverage		40%
Purely informational content		40%
Graphics (charts, infographics etc.)		35%
Press releases		33%
Behind the scenes information (things you would normally not have access to without following the account)		25%
Contests or giveaways		21%
Audio		8%
None of these		1%

10. The following chart portrays why individuals follow the official @THON Twitter account:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
To show support for the organization (add to their follower base)							5.49
To receive information about upcoming events							5.25
To be inspired by the organization's doings							4.82
To get information during THON weekend							4.68
To find out about Four Diamonds Families (stories)							4.58
To learn about THON and THON's history							4.39
To learn about volunteer/service opportunities							4.27
To learn about fundraising							4.20
Because I am a Committee Member, Captain or Overall							3.59

11. The following chart portrays why individuals "Like" the official THON Facebook account:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
To show support for the organization (add to their follower base)							5.55
To receive information about upcoming events							5.15
To be inspired by the organization's doings							4.95
To get information during THON weekend							4.45
To find out about Four Diamonds Families (stories)							5.05
To learn about THON and THON's history							4.52
To learn about volunteer/service opportunities							4.28
To learn about fundraising							4.36
Because I am a Committee Member, Captain or Overall							3.50

12. Survey takers tweet about THON on average 25.79 times a year (SD: 81.55) and retweet an average of 18.11 times (SD: 32.62). They post on Facebook about THON an average of 18.22 times a year (SD: 23.62) and share a post about THON an average of 12.25 times a year (SD: 33.7). It is important to notice the large standard deviations showing the large variance in the amount of times people create and share THON content.

13. If a person communicates with THON on Facebook the average of THON communicating back with them was a 3.13 out of 6. If a person communicates with THON on Twitter the average of THON communicating back with them was a 3.07 out of 6. (1 Unlikely-6 Likely)

14. The following chart portrays how individuals view the THON Facebook account on the following categories:

	Very Unssessful				Very Successful	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Transparent: Disclosure or Openness					4.63	
Informative: Information Dissemination					5.08	
Interactive: Interactivity and Involvement					4.99	
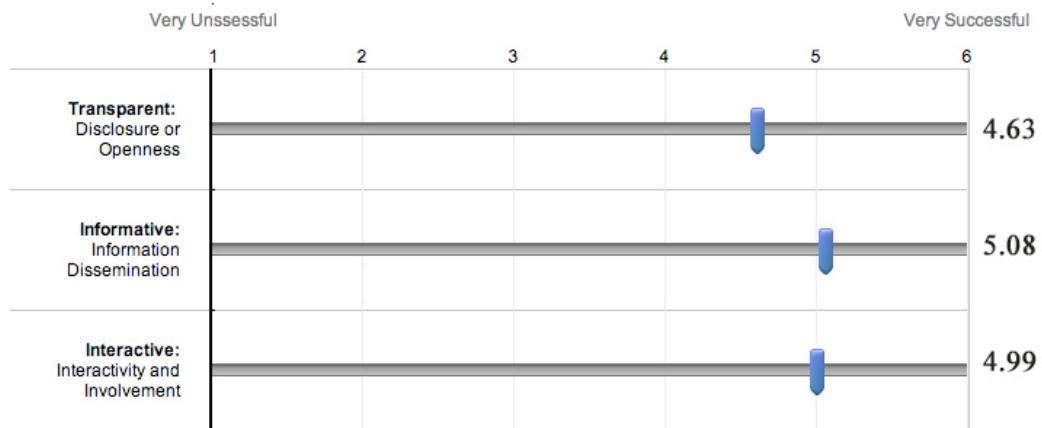
15. The following chart portrays how individuals view the THON Twitter account on the following categories:

	Very Unssessful				Very Successful	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Transparent: Disclosure or Openness					4.41	
Informative: Information Dissemination					4.86	
Interactive: Interactivity and Involvement					4.88	
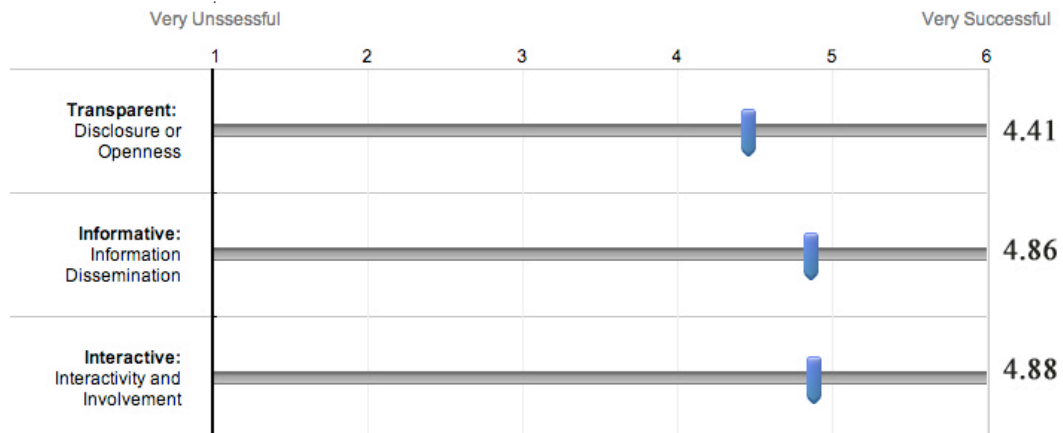
16. When it came to the THON accounts asking for feedback or recommendations,
    respondents say that THON asks for feedback or recommendations on average 2.96 times
    throughout the THON 2013 season. However, 159 (68.2%) people responded that THON
    asks for feedback "0" times in a year (out of the 233 people that answered the question).

17. Users went on Twitter an average of 11.93 times during THON weekend to find out
    about information regarding THON (SD: 63.68) and users went on Facebook an average
    of 4.31 times during THON weekend to find out about information regarding THON
    (SD: 9.393). It is important to notice the large standard deviation showing the large
    variance in the amount of times people went on Twitter during THON weekend.

18. The following chart portrays how successful individuals view the THON Facebook and
    Twitter account on the following categories. (1 Very Unsuccessful-6 Very Successful)

	Facebook	Twitter
Informative	4.93	4.9
Useful	4.85	4.84
Entertaining	4.9	4.82
Motivating	5.2	4.99

19. The last two questions of the survey were open ended and allowed users to give
    recommendations for THON and THON's social media accounts. There were over 100
    responses to the questions. The large amount of responses and ideas from survey takers
    could be because THON does not ask for recommendations and opinions very often.
    Although the open-ended data and responses are very important and relevant, the extent
    of the results can not be shared in this report. However, all of the answers can be found in
    Appendix G and Appendix H.

Descriptive Data Findings and Implications

Main Finding	Supporting Data	Implications
Strong THON leadership in respondent group	35.271% are Committee members 6.977% are Captains 0.775% are Overalls	A large percentage of users are in the leadership structure of THON, which causes them to have a more intimate relationship with THON. Due to their investment in the organization they many may hold a positive bias when it comes to evaluating THON in any capacity. This could lead to the skewing of data (in a positive light).
Facebook and Twitter most active platforms	Users check Facebook 8.53 times daily and Twitter 8.1 times daily. Instagram is also checked approximately 1.33 times daily.	Users are checking Facebook and Twitter the most often of any social media network. This requires THON to stay the most active on those two platforms. Instagram was the only other network that was checked at least one time daily (on average). The most time and effort when it comes to curating content should be spent on Facebook and Twitter.
High number of friends/followers	Based on a national study by Pew Internet, the average amount of Friends that a person has on Facebook is 229 and the average amount of followers on Twitter is 126. Those involved with THON have an average of 806.05 friends on Facebook and 160.45 followers on Twitter.	Reed's law defines the exponential power of information transfer through communities and groupings. The study proves that THON's messages are being transmitted through an exponentially larger group of individuals compared to the average user and

		their network. Because individuals in THON's social media community inherently have a much larger individual social network than average, it allows for the possibility of mass message dissemination beyond compare.
Strong reliance on organizations	The top way that users say they receive information about THON is from their THON organization (8.64 out of 10 in importance category). The user's THON organization was the second highest influence in getting users to follow the THON social media accounts. (7.76 out of 10 in importance category).	Individuals ranked THON organizations as the most important way to get information about THON. Organizations were also very influential when it came to getting users involved in the THON social media accounts. THON needs to be sure to reach out to THON organizations and ask them to encourage their members to get involved with the THON social media accounts. Because the organizations are so influential in information dissemination as well as getting individuals involved with the accounts, organizations have the power to pass on important information about THON and the THON social media accounts. With the help and power of organizations, THON can achieve a much higher social community growth.

Moderate likelihood of THON responding	Users were asked how likely THON is to respond to communication on a scale from 1-6. Users rated the THON Facebook account a 3.16 and the THON Twitter account a 3.07.	By utilizing dialogic communication, THON can create an interactive and engaged community. The users who interacted with THON do not have a view that is as favorable as it should be. Users should feel comfortable communicating with the accounts and feel confident in getting a response back. On a scale from unlikely to likely, users scores were neutral. To create a dialogic relationship, the scores have to be closer to "likely" so that users feel noticed and so that they feel like they are appreciated and noticed by THON. THON needs to stay as a many-to-many interactive communication platform instead of a broadcast platform of one-to-many. There is a lack of collaborative effort which can be solved with comments and posts back to individuals in the THON social community.
Follow and "like" THON to add to follower base and to get information about upcoming events	When it came to the reason that users follow the THON accounts the number one reason is: "to show support for the organization (add to THON's follower base)" on both Facebook (5.55 out of 6) and Twitter (5.49 out of 6).	A benefit for THON is that many people want to show their support by adding THON to their social media networks. With this idea in place, THON will continue to gain followers and "likes" from each incoming year of

	The second highest reason for both Facebook and Twitter was to get information about upcoming events (5.15 and 5.25 respectively)	students involved with THON for this reason. The next highest reason people follow the accounts is to get information about upcoming events. In order to keep people engaged with the accounts, THON needs to be consistent in posting information about upcoming events so that users can consistently trust THON for event updates and information.
Transparency: least successful of the social media strategies	Of the social media strategies, transparency (disclosure and openness) was the least successful method on Facebook and Twitter (4.63 and 4.41 respectfully)	Of the three necessary social media strategies, transparency was the least successful according to the survey results. All of the categories fall between somewhat successful and successful on the survey scales, which is a good indication that THON is using their social media accounts in a way to market to their target audience. Of the three categories it would be beneficial for THON to show transparency by making an effort to identify account administrators and give access to behind the scenes information.

Correlations and Implications

Many significant correlations were found from the examination of the survey data. All of

the following correlations had a p value less than .045 (p < .045). Not all significant correlations

revealed are being presented. Other significant correlations can be found in Appendix I.

Correlation	Correlation Number In order of mention	Implications
The older an individual is the less likely they are to get information about THON from their THON organization and they are less likely they are to get involved with THON's social media accounts because of their THON organization.	(-.341) (-.269)	As people get older it is important to make sure there is a way for them to receive information about THON other than through an organization. Organizations are not influential in getting people involved in social media either so it is important to take advantage of other ways to promote the accounts. Other promotional options such as press releases and news articles, commercials during the airing of the THON documentary or paid posts or hashtags could be utilized.
The older an individual is the more they use Twitter as a means to get information during THON weekend and the less successful they think THON is at being transparent on Twitter.	(.144) (-.139)	Transparency is a key strategy for social media marketing so it would be beneficial to identify the key individuals running the account during THON weekend to provide a way to trust the accounts and the content that is posted. Another thing THON could do is show behind the scenes information in order for followers to feel like they are seeing all that is going on.
The longer the person is involved with THON the more likely they are to get their information from the official THON social media accounts and their Overall, Captain or Committee.	(.17) (.602)	It is important for the accounts to always target new users knowing that they already have a strong base of seasoned followers who strongly rely on the leadership structure and official accounts to get information about THON.
The more times a person	(.129)	It is important to vary the content on the stated media in order to

checks Twitter the more often they check blogs, Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest.	(.143) (.18) (.184)	avoid reiterating the same information to the same audience. Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest are all visual platforms so based upon common usage; the visually based platforms were strongly related when it comes to how often people check them. The more visual a person is, the more they were active on not one, but multiple visual platforms. In order to reach the visually driven users who are active on multiple platforms, it is important to post visually targeted content.
The more followers a person has on Twitter the more likely they are to be the person their friends turn to for social activity advice.	(.249)	If the owner of a large network is also someone who is a social leader, his or her opinion and voice holds even more weight. Reed's law can also be significant in this situation because the more connections in a network the further the message is distributed.
The longer a person has been involved with THON the more they check blogs.	(.134)	It is important to keep a strong community on the blog by catering the content to people already involved in THON to start conversation with active bloggers. Because, currently, people cannot subscribe and because the blog is not as active as other social media platforms it is important to interact with those already invested in the platform.
The more likely a person is to get their information about THON from the official THON accounts the more likely they are to get their information about THON from an Overall, Captain or Committee and the more influential a THON Overall, Captain or Committee was in getting them involved with the THON social media accounts.	(.34) (.243)	The strongest conclusion is that people are more likely to get their information about THON from the official THON social media accounts if they are active leaders within the THON community. The leadership structure strongly advocates people to follow the accounts so it might be a good idea to target the organizational structure within THON. If organizations were asked to try harder to get their members involved it would be a great way to get many more individuals involved. Those in the leadership structure are already using the official THON accounts actively.

The more likely that a person is interested in THON videos the more they are interested in THON pictures, posts about specific children who benefited from THON and Four Diamond Family stories.	(.609) (.484) (.406)	Tweets including videos, family stories and photos help users feel inspired from the Twitter account and help persuade users to primarily use the official THON accounts for information about THON. It is important to include videos, family stories, pictures or stats often in social media content in order to inhibit individuals to get their information from the THON social media accounts and result in being inspired by the content. Focusing on the content that people specifically check the official THON accounts to see, will result in return visits and inspiration; both elements of dialogic communication.
The more likely a person follows THON because they are an Overall, Captain or on a Committee the more likely they are to get information about THON from a THON Overall, Captain or Committee and the more influential a THON Overall, Captain or Committee was in getting them involved with the THON social media accounts.	(.556) (.541)	Again, It is very significant how influential being a part of the leadership structure is. Those in the leadership structure get more heavily involved with the THON social media accounts as well as receive information about THON via their superiors in the leadership structure. It is just another example that proves that the leadership structure is doing a great job at getting individuals involved with THON and THON social media.
The more influential THON weekend is in getting a person involved with the THON social media accounts the more likely they get their information about THON from the official THON social media accounts.	(.266)	THON weekend is a very important time to gain new followers and "likes" on social media. Those individuals also have a high retention rate stating that they get all of their information about THON from the official social media accounts. There was an 8.03% increase in followers during THON weekend 2013 (Friday-Monday) alone and a 8.04% increase in Facebook "likes". These percentages are high considering there was a 41.34% increase in

		Twitter followers for the whole THON 2013 fundraising year (April 2012-April 2013) and a 25.98% increase in Facebook 'likes".
The more influential THON weekend is in getting a person involved with the THON social media accounts he more interested a person is in THON video content, pictures and statistics/facts.	(.147) (.144) (.156)	It is important to post content including videos, pictures and statistics during THON weekend to add to the THON social media community. Posts with that content are the reason users became involved in the THON accounts because of THON weekend. It is an opportune time to cater to video, picture and statistic/fact content knowing it is the kind of content that draws in followers and "likes" THON weekend.
The more successful a person thinks Twitter is at informing him/her about THON the more a person is interested in THON videos, statistics and facts and Four Diamond Family stories.	(.208) (.25) (.319)	The more a user was familiar with the THON accounts the more they realized the information sharing potential. In order for people to feel informed by the social media accounts it is important to first, share Four Diamonds family stories and secondly videos and statistics. Targeting specific content it will allow users to feel informed by the THON accounts.
The more successful a person thinks Facebook and Twitter are at keeping THON transparent the more likely a person is to like THON on Facebook to be informed about THON fundraising efforts and the more likely a person is to follow THON on Twitter to be informed of THON fundraising efforts.	(.383) (.416)	Users find THON more transparent when they are informed about the fundraising efforts of THON on Facebook and Twitter. Content including Four Diamond Family stories and videos expose the organization to social media users. The release of the annual summary of fundraising activities needs to also be promoted and communicated on social media. THON always publicizes the release of the summary of fundraising activities but it would be beneficially to simplify and share different aspects and parts of the report.
The more a person thinks that THON's Twitter is	(.766)	Similar to the previous correlation, the correlation shows that users who think one of the platforms are transparent also think the other

transparent the more successful a person thinks Facebook is at keeping THON transparent.		is transparent. It proves that if a user thinks THON is transparent, they do on all platforms.
The more a person is interested by THON videos and Four Diamond Family stories the more successful a person thinks Facebook is at interacting with followers and the more successful a person thinks Twitter is at interacting with their followers.	Facebook (.22) video (.20) family stories Twitter (.23) videos (.347) family stories	Although posting video or family story content may not be a direct response to user comments, it is a way for people to feel like they are a part of the organization. Users have a chance to post their wishes and concerns with families allowing them to feel involved and interactive in the situation. Videos are also a way for people to feel more grounded in the situation and the fact that they are actually part of something (THON). When it comes to commonalities among the correlations, the inclusion of video and family story content on social media led to higher success rates with all of the strategies for social media marketing. THON would strongly benefit by improving all three social media strategies and it is possible to do so by making sure to include video as well as family story content on all platforms.
The more successful a person thinks Twitter is at interacting with followers the more influential a THON Overall, Captain or Committee was in getting them involved with the official THON social media accounts.	(.147)	Those who are more likely to be a part of the leadership structure (and have, statistically, been involved with THON social media networks longer) think that THON Facebook and Twitter accounts are successful in informing users, keeping transparent and interacting with users. This brings up the possibility of a user bias with those involved in the THON leadership structure. Again, it is important to target the THON community who is not necessarily part of the leadership structure with content in hopes of them feeling more involved with the THON accounts.
The more successful a person thinks Twitter is at interacting with	(.16) (.216)	Because interactivity is directly related to communicating with the THON account, it is a positive correlation. The users who are very

followers the more a person Tweets and retweets about THON.		active on Twitter appreciate the dialogic communication potential on Twitter. Something else that is beneficial is that if a user thinks that THON is interactive on Twitter they also believe THON is transparent and informative— touching on all three strategies.

GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The current thesis was concerned with investigating how nonprofits, specifically THON, use social media as a marketing tool and community building mechanism. I examined user demographics, social media use, motivations for being involved with THON on social media and personal attitudes about the THON social media accounts. The goals were to find out how social media was used and to develop recommendations for THON to use in the future.

Two research methods were used. By conducting interviews of past THON social media administrators it was possible to learn about the management of the THON social media accounts as well as develop the questions for the second research method—a survey. The survey was used to get quantitative data in order to extract descriptive statistics and correlations from the respondent group.

The results reviewed a lot of significant implications. The following section discusses the results of the finding through the research questions.

Research Questions Revisited

RQ 1: How does the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) use social media as a marketing tool to leverage a supportive and an active community?

Currently THON has social media accounts on the following platforms: Facebook "like" page, Twitter, YouTube, Tumblr, Foursquare, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, Storify, Blog (hosted on THON.org), Vine and Viddy. Those interviewed identified that only a small group of THON leaders have posting access to the THON social media accounts—currently two to three people. Every year, new people are chosen to run the accounts which causes a disconnect in goals and voice from year to year without an overarching set of written objectives edited and

passed down annually. According to the current Social Media Captains, there needs to be a better

way to split up the social media responsibilities in order to better engage all of the active social

media accounts. One of the current Captains voiced concern with all of the accounts:

"There are a lot of social media platforms and they (THON) are keeping all of them

active and not posting to the best of their abilities on all of them. Every social media

presence should be exactly what they want people to think of THON and we need to

make sure none of them are lacking."

Because Twitter and Facebook are the most used platforms it is more logical to have one

Captain assigned to each platform. The addition of a third Social Media Captain could help

balance the responsibilities by assigning one person the lesser used social media platforms (i.e.

Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr). The rapid turnover of leadership requires THON to keep consistent

in online content and voice so that the community trusts the content on the social media accounts.

This can be accomplished by creating a simple guide to past down every year. By coming up with

main goals and objectives for the accounts and keeping the goals consistent from year to year it

creates dependability despite different management.

Training consists of receiving a report from the previous year, which includes a rough

outline of events and positives and negatives from the previous year. Observing what other

organizations are doing is another way that THON volunteers learn how to use social media

however, reading resources, attending conferences, or hiring someone on staff has not been

implemented. THON has, however, hired a firm, Fleishman-Hillard, to primarily deal with public

relations and strategy and help with social media efforts. 27% of nonprofit organizations

THON's size have also invested in the help of a marketing or public relations firm according to

Ventureneer research in 2010 (Figure 1-7). The amount paid to Fleishman-Hillard was

undetermined by the current Overall Committee, however zero other marketing dollars have ever been invested in social media marketing. It is concerning that there is not internal transparency with THON's marketing budget which in turn makes it hard to achieve outward transparency. In looking at other nonprofit organizations, in 2010 only 4% who have had social media for two or more years did not budget any money for social media and it was predicted in 2011 that number would go to 0% (Ventureneer; Figure 1-11; Figure 1-12). In staying competitive, reassessing the need for a strictly social media marketing budget could be necessary for THON.

Most commonly, interviewees mentioned that increasing awareness was the goal of the THON social media accounts. Only two of those interviewed (neither of the interviewees acting as the active administrators) brought up making THON interactive and an active community as a secondary goal. However, if THON focuses on building a larger community, the content on the account will then spread exponentially based on Reed's law. When the primary goal is building an engaged community, awareness is still successfully achieved as a byproduct. Disseminating information and informing users of THON's mission were also brought up as goals. All of those who interviewed agreed that fundraising was never the primary focus on social media. All previous research on nonprofit social media marketing has found that creating a community is the most important goal when using the account for marketing use. Ideally, all of those involved should actively strive to create an active and engaged social community for THON as well as identify it as a main goal for the social media accounts. Recommendations for the THON accounts in the future revolved around community building online. An individual involved in 2012 stated:

"Yes, we do want media attention and we want for THON to be able to grow, but it all

began with a community and having a social media presence that reflects that is

important. I thought that my Co-Captain and I had a more community-based idea with

goals of outreach and interaction within that community and beyond. This year, I feel as if I am seeing less of a social media presence and it is more of a "press release" type of feel."

Because of THON is an energetic and emotionally charged nonprofit organization it is important to mirror those attitudes on the social media accounts. The content on every one of THON's social media accounts should portray the attitudes associated with THON at Penn State and show THON's supportive and active community online.

RQ 2: Does the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (THON) employ the strategies of social media marketing as well as the principles for dialogic communication on social media in the eyes of those involved with the organization?

It is first important to recognize that a large percentage of those who took the survey are a part of the THON leadership structures (43%). Being a part of the THON leadership structure allows an individual to have a very intimate relationship with THON. Because they work multiple hours weekly on THON related matters, many hold a positive bias when it comes to evaluating THON in any capacity. By putting so much effort into the success of THON, those who are a part of the leadership structure take personal stock in the success and attitudes associated with THON. This could lead to the skewing of data.

Strategies of social media marketing

When it comes to the THON Facebook page, disclosure and openness items including a description of the organizations programs and services, the organization history, the mission statement, the organizations web address, and the logo. However there is no listing of the

administrators on the profile, only the generic Public Relations Overall email address is listed

(who is not the primary person running the accounts). The only items that are included on the

THON Twitter page are a description of the organization, the web address and the logo. There is

a donation link as well as a link to the THON store present on the THON Facebook page.

Although there is not a list of events or a specific link for people to click if they want to

volunteer, both the Twitter and Facebook account post often about events as well as how to

become involved with THON. The survey results showed that of the three necessary social media

strategies, transparency (disclosure and openness) was the least successful according to the

respondents. The public's view of transparency could be improved by releasing the individuals

who run the accounts and by giving access to behind the scenes information. Only 25% of

respondents remember seeing behind the scenes information present on the social media

accounts.

The survey results helped to determine which of the information dissemination items

THON is successful at addressing according to those who follow or "like" the account. Only 40%

of respondents remember THON social media content including links or posts containing news

items, 40% remember seeing purely informational content (which includes campaign summaries),

33% remember seeing links to press releases and 8% remember seeing audio content. THON was

successful in addressing the following information dissemination items: 95% of people surveyed

remember seeing pictures, 81% remember seeing video content and 67% recognized seeing

posted announcements on how to get involved.

Interactivity and involvement is the foundation of dialogic communication. Only 21% of

respondents remember posts or tweets containing contests, promotions or giveaways and only

42% remember seeing questions targeted to followers. It is very important for users to be deeply

involved in the account which can be accomplished by providing questions to spark discussion or

promotions and giveaways to keep users engaged and promote return visits.

Principles for dialogic communications

All of the individuals interviewed mentioned that THON had a goal to post and to tweet at least once daily which directly impacts the generation of return visitors to the site via content updates, one of the dialogic principles (Rybalko, Svetlana, and Trent Seltzer 2; Briones, Rowena L., et al. 2). It also works to enable the conservation of visitors on the site with constantly updated content. The THON Twitter account is kept more active due to the platform's nature. Like previously stated, 21% of respondents remember posts or tweets containing contests, promotions or giveaways which are pivotal incentives that can be used to gain return visits to the sites.

In 2013, THON made efforts to leverage control over the THON social community with the creation of Social Media Community Guidelines (found in Appendix F) to protect the content on the THON social media accounts. A daily editorial calendar was also created for the 2013 THON year with the goal to create tailored information to the public, but the administrators also made sure to stay fluid with other relevant items that came up during the week. Questions and comments are addressed to the best of the ability of those in charge of the accounts however, many mentioned that it would be impossible to respond to every comment or tweet. According to survey respondents, they check the official THON Twitter and Facebook accounts for similar reasons barring the following: users follow Twitter more than Facebook to receive information during THON weekend, they follow Facebook more than Twitter if they want information about Four Diamonds Families or family stories and they rely on Facebook more often than Twitter to learn about THON and THON's history. Content on the THON Twitter and Facebook accounts should be tailored to the reasons users turn to the accounts for information.

When it came to the THON providing a dialogical loop through feedback or recommendations, respondents say that THON asked for feedback an average of 2.96 times through the year on all platforms combined. However, 68.2% responded that THON did not ask

for feedback at all through the year. The majority of users think that THON does not ask for

feedback or recommendations at all causing the communication to be one way on the social

media platforms. The people who communicated with THON on Facebook and Twitter rated

THON communicating back to them as "neutral" on a scale from unlikely to likely. Users have to

feel comfortable communicating with the accounts and feel confident that they will get a response

back. The large number of people who had feedback for THON in the open-ended survey

questions shows that people would appreciate a medium to share their thoughts. THON needs to

stay as a many-to-many interactive platform as apposed to a one-to-many broadcast platform.

There is a lack of collaborative effort, which can be solved with comments and posts back to

individuals in the THON social community.

RQ 3: What opportunities are there for the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon

(THON) to better use social media to reach their constituents and create a strong online

community?

Platforms/Usage

Survey respondents check Facebook and Twitter the most of any social media network.

This requires THON to stay the most active on those platforms. The most effort should be used to

create and maintain content on Facebook and Twitter. THON can be more successful by

assigning one Social Media Captain per platform. It will allow the Captain to dedicate the time

needed to create content but also spend time building relationships with users and responding to

communication on both platforms. THON users have 3.5 times more friends than the average

Facebook user and 40 more followers than the average Twitter user. Because of the exponential

power of information transfer through groupings (Reed's law) THON's messages are being

passed through an inordinately larger community than the average message on Facebook. The data also suggests that the owner of a large Twitter network is also someone who is a social leader; meaning his or her opinion and voice holds even more weight. THON must realize the power that the individuals in their social network hold.

The longer the individual has been involved with THON the more they rely on the official THON accounts to get information about THON. Those users are already strongly invested in the accounts and are return visitors to the sites. It is a good idea to always target new and young users to hopefully transform them in to return visitors to the site.

Users of Twitter also proved to be frequent users of blogs, Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest. THON needs to vary the content on the previously stated platforms so that they do not continually expose users to the identical information on multiple platforms. By providing unique content on each of the social media platforms it encourages users to stay active on not one, but all of the social media sites. Blogs, Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest are also very visually driven which leads to believing they users who frequent the sites are strongly influenced by imagery. It is important to release a large percentage of visual content on THON's Twitter, blog, Flickr, Instagram and Pinterest.

Those involved with THON the longest check blogs more often. Because, currently, people cannot subscribe to the THON blog and because there has never been a comment posted on the blog it is important to cater blog content to those heavily involved with THON. The THON blog should specifically speak to those who have an understanding of THON and who has been part of the community for a long time. Unlike Facebook and Twitter, the THON blog needs to develop conversation with current active bloggers before they can reach out to new followers.

Involvement

There is an opportunity for THON to grow their social media networks by targeting THON organizations. THON organizations was the most important way that individuals get information about THON and THON organizations was the second most important reason that users became involved with the THON social media accounts. Also, due to the fact that people are already more likely to get their information about THON from the official THON social media accounts if they are a part of the leadership structure, it makes sense to target the organizational structure. Due to the influence that organizations have, THON has the opportunity to reach out more vigorously to organizations to get their members involved with the THON social media accounts. The power of having the organizational structure promoting the official accounts can stimulate a large social media growth.

The motivation to follow the accounts is rooted strongly in showing support for the cause and adding to the network's follower base. Based in this principle, THON's content should target new students (freshman) and those new to THON to allow those users to show their support from the start of their involvement. Getting information about upcoming events was the second most important reason people follow the accounts. By posting upcoming event information for all of the many events that happen through the THON fundraising season, users can more reliably use the THON social media accounts for event updates.

Strategies for Using Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Of the three social media marketing strategies survey results showed that transparency (disclosure and openness) was the least successful in regards to THON's Twitter and Facebook

page. It is possible to increase the public's view of THON's transparency by releasing the identity

of the individuals who run the accounts as well as a way to contact them (i.e. a direct email

address or their personal Twitter handle). By showing the public elements about THON that they

would normally not be accessible, THON can seem more transparent online. The release of

fundraising activities (which THON currently does) is also a way to monetarily provide

transparency.

For social media users to feel informed about THON, administrators need to share Four

Diamonds Family stories, videos and statistics the most out of any kind of content.

The more interested a person is in THON videos the more successful they think THON is

at communicating on social media. Although posting a THON video is not a direct response to an

individual, videos provide a way for users to feel like they are a part of the organizations. Users

have a chance to post their wishes or concerns (especially on videos focusing on Four Diamond

Family) which helps to ground users in the organization and allows them to feel significant.

Posting video content and family stories led to higher success rates with all of the strategies for

social media marketing on both Facebook and Twitter. Thus, the most important kinds of content

to include on the Facebook and Twitter page to employ the strategies for using social media as a

marketing tool are video posts and information about Four Diamond Families.

Those who have been involved with THON social media networks longer (and who

statistically are more likely to be a part of the leadership structure of THON) think that THON

Facebook and Twitter accounts are successful in informing users, keeping transparent and

interacting with users. This brings up the possibility of a user bias with those involved in the

THON leadership structure. Again, it is important to target the THON community who is not

necessarily part of the leadership structure with content in hopes of them feeling more involved

with the THON accounts.

Content

Significant positive correlations were found between videos, photos and Four Diamond Family stories on social media. All of the items previously mentioned also help users to feel inspired when they are posted on the THON accounts and help to persuade users to use the official THON accounts to get information bout THON. By including videos, photos and Four Diamond Family Story content there is a stronger possibility that users will feel inspired and trust the official THON accounts.

THON weekend is a very important time to gain new followers on Twitter and "likes" on Facebook. There was an 8.03% increase in followers during THON weekend 2013 (Friday-Monday) alone and a 8.04% increase in Facebook "likes". Those who said THON weekend was influential in getting them involved in the THON social media accounts are also most interested in videos, pictures and statistics and facts. It is extremely important for THON to post content including videos, pictures and statistics/facts during THON weekend to continually have large community growth during THON weekend annually.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study's research included limitations within the interviews. The group of interviewees did not include the same amount of administrators for each of the years that there have been THON social media accounts. It would have been ideal to interview the same amount of administrators from every year as well as interview people who held the same position to see specific changes per position, year to year. Because some of those interviewed have not been an administrator on the account for a few years, there were times when some of the interviewees did not fully remember how the accounts were used and had a hard time answering questions.

Scheduling conflicts and where people live required the interviews to be conducted by different

methods (in person, phone, over email), which could have skewed the interviewees' responses.

The study's research included limitations within the survey. First, although the survey

was open and publicized for a two-week period, all of the responses were submitted in one week.

The activity dwindled after the first week of the survey being live. There were 275 people who

fully finished the survey. Because the THON community is very active it was very disappointing

to not receive more responses. The survey was not particularly diverse as 75% of respondents

were female.

When it came to presenting data, there were over 900 statistically significant correlations.

It was necessary to pick out the most statistically significant data to present as well as correlations

that were important, unexpected or expected. However, there were many correlations with

significance that could not be included in the data results section or Appendix I. There were two

short answer data responses questions at the end of the social media survey. Over 100 responses

were recorded for the two short answer questions. Although, there was not a place to include the

data collected, the responses are located in Appendix G and H. The responses are very relevant

for those who are or will be administrators of the THON social media accounts and the responses

share a lot of users' opinions.

Because there has not been previous research on college run nonprofit organizations (or

philanthropies) it would be interesting to extend the research to other universities. Many schools

have their own version of a dance marathon philanthropy. By collecting data from a multitude of

universities, the data could be used to mutually help universities build their social media

community and use social network platforms as a marketing tool for their fundraising efforts.

Since the research found that THON does not ask for feedback or recommendations, it

would be beneficial for the Penn State Dance Marathon leadership structure to conduct research.

The results would be useful for the administrators of the account and to promote future success,

trust in the accounts and positive opinion of the accounts. It is apparent that the THON social

media community has very strong opinions as well as fresh ideas. It is up to THON to reach out

to users to not only improve THON, but also maintain a dialogic loop through opportunity for

feedback (one of the five principles to build open communication with publics) (Rybalko and

Seltzer 2; Briones et al. 2). For a fully student-run nonprofit organization with such active

involvement and with such passionate, contagious energy it makes sense to go to those involved

to help improve THON for the future.

REFERENCES

Awareness. "6 Mind-Blowing Social Media Stats And What They Mean for Marketers." *Awareness Social Marketing Software* (2012).

Bortree, Denise Sevick, and Trent Seltzer. "Dialogic strategies and outcomes: An analysis of environmental advocacy groups' Facebook profiles." *Public Relations Review* 35.3 (2009): 317-319.

Briones, Rowena L., et al. "Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships." *Public Relations Review* 37.1 (2011): 37-43.

Charron, Chris, Japp Favier, and Charlene Li. "Social Computing." *Forrester Research, Inc.* (2006).

"DATA STRATEGY: Will Social Media Kill Off Traditional Marketing?" *Marketing Week* (2010): 41.

Duggan, Maeve, Joanna Brenner and Pew Internet and American Life Project. "The Demographics of Social Media Users." (Dec 2012).

Edosomwan, Simeon, et al. "The history of social media and its impact on business." *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship* 16.3 (2011): 79-91.

Elliott, Nate, and Emily Riley. "Master The Next Wave of Social." *Forrester Research, Inc.* (2012).

Elliott, Stuart. "Building a Buzz in Social Media Ahead of Traditional Marketing."*The New York Times* 23 Jun. 2011: B03.

Enrollment, Fall Semester 2012. Digital image. *Penn State News*. Department of Public Information, Oct. 2012.

Esrock, S. L., and Liechty, G. R.. "Organization of corporate web pages: Publics and functions." *Public Relations Review* 26 (2000): 327-344.

Fenwick, Nigel. "Competitive Advantage Though Social Business." *Forrester Research, Inc.*

    (2012).

Fenwick, Nigel. "Social Media Use And Perceptions." *Forrester Research, Inc. (2010).*

Fighting Pediatric Cancer. Penn State Hershey Medical Center, 2013. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

Greenberg, Josh, and Maggie MacAulay. "NPO 2.0? Exploring the web presence of

    environmental nonprofit organizations in Canada." *Global Media Journal–Canadian*

    Edition 2.1 (2009): 63-88.

Kent, Michael L., and Maureen Taylor. "Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide

    Web." *Public Relations Review* 24.3 (1998): 321-334.

Koploqitz, Rob. "Leveraging Millennials To Drive Enterprise Social Initiatives" *Forrester*

    Research, Inc. (2011).

Lovejoy, Kristen, and Gregory D. Saxton. "Information, Community, and Action: How

    Nonprofit Organizations Use Social Media*." *Journal of Computer‐Mediated*

    Communication 17.3 (2012): 337-353.

Lovejoy, Kristen, Richard D. Waters, and Gregory D. Saxton. "Engaging stakeholders through

    Twitter: How nonprofit organizations are getting more out of 140 characters or

    less." *Public Relations Review* (2012).

Mangold, W. Glynn, and David J. Faulds. "Social media: The new hybrid element of the

    promotion mix." *Business horizons* 52.4 (2009): 357-365.

McCrea, Lauren. "16 Brands Leading the Way with Exemplary Social Media Customer

    Service." *Ignite Social Media*. Ignite Social Media, 7 Nov. 2012. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

Melton, James, and Nancy Hicks. "Integrating social and traditional media in the client

    project." *Business Communication Quarterly* 74.4 (2011): 494-504.

Men, Linjuan Rita, and Wan-Hsiu Sunny Tsai. "How companies cultivate relationships with publics on social network sites: Evidence from China and the United States." *Public Relations Review* (2011).

Mintel International. "Social Networking—US." May 2012. Mintel International. Pennsylvania State University Library, State College, PA. 25 Feb. 2013

Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon. 2013. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (@THON). Cite content. *Twitter.com*. 10 Feb. 2013. Web. 8 Mar. 2013.

Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon (Penn State Dance Marathon). Cite content. *Facebook.com*. 10 Feb. 2013. Web. 8 Mar. 2013.

Redbox (Redbox). Cite content. *Facebook.com*. 17 Jan. 2013. Web. 8 Mar. 2013.

Reed, David P. "The law of the pack." *Harvard Business Review* 79.2 (2001): 23-24.

Rybalko, Svetlana, and Trent Seltzer. "Dialogic communication in 140 characters or less: How Fortune 500 companies engage stakeholders using Twitter." *Public Relations Review* 36.4 (2010): 336-341.

Schultz, Don E., and Heidi F. Schultz. "Transitioning marketing communication into the twenty-first century." *Journal of Marketing Communications* 4.1 (1998): 9-26.

Craig, Smith. "(March 2013) How Many People Use the Top Social Media, Apps & Services?" *Digital Marketing Ramblings*. N.p., 23 Mar. 2013. Web. 28 Mar. 2013.

Solis, Brian. "Defining Social Media: 2006 - 2010." Web log post. *Brian Solis*. Altimeter Group, 7 Jan. 2010. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Tariq, Muhammad, and Fazal Wahid. "Assessing effectiveness of social media and traditional marketing approaches in terms of cost and target segment coverage." *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* 3.1 (2011): 1049-1074.

Thackeray, Rosemary, et al. "Enhancing promotional strategies within social marketing

   programs: use of Web 2.0 social media." *Health promotion practice*9.4 (2008): 338-343.

"THON through the Years." *Penn State Alumni Library*. The Penn State Alumni Association and

   the University Libraries, 2011. Web. 25 Feb. 2013.

"Twitter and Facebook Are for News, MySpace Is for Leisure." *Chitika Online Advertising

   Network*. Chitika Inc., 2012. Web. 28 Feb. 2013.

Vaynerchuk, Gary. "I'm on a Horse: How Old Spice Played Ping-Pong, Then Dropped the

   Ball." *The Thank You Economy*. NewYork: HarperBusiness (2011): 119-130.

Waters, Richard D., and Jia Y. Jamal. "Tweet, tweet, tweet: A content analysis of nonprofit

   organizations' Twitter updates." *Public Relations Review* 37.3 (2011): 321-324.

Waters, Richard D., et al. "Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit

   organizations are using Facebook." *Public Relations Review* 35.2 (2009): 102-106.

APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Figure 1-1 *Metcalfe's Law Depiction*

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Metcalfe-Network-Effect.svg
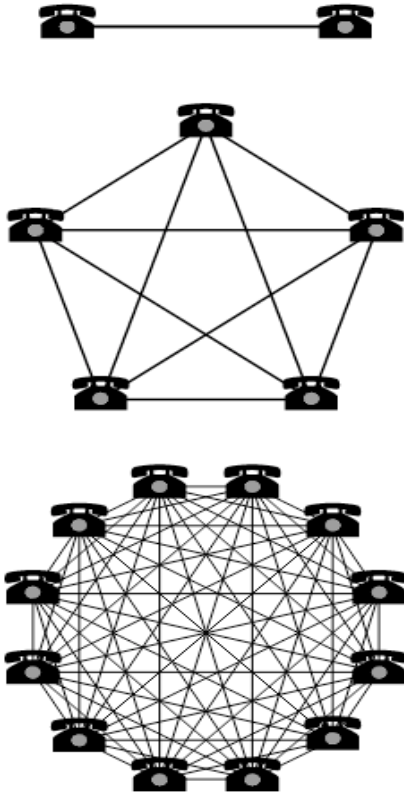
Figure 1-2: *Redbox Facebook Response Time*

Source: https://www.facebook.com/redbox accessed on January 17th, 2013

Figure 1-3: *Redbox Facebook Contest*
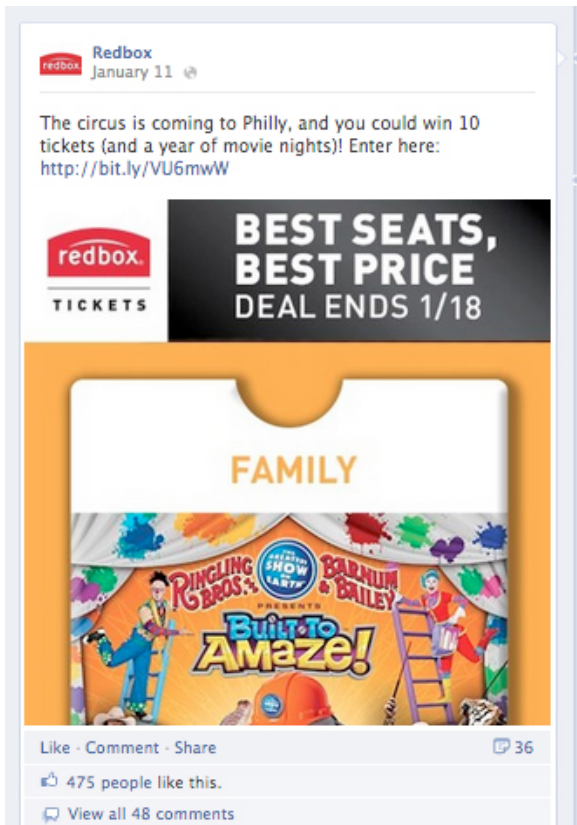
Source: https://www.facebook.com/redbox accessed on January 17th, 2013

Figure 1-4: *Redbox Facebook Consumer Input*

Source: https://www.facebook.com/redbox accessed on January 17th, 2013

Figure 1-5: *Redbox Facebook Consumer Feedback*

Source: https://www.facebook.com/redbox accessed on January 17th, 2013

Figure 1-6: *Redbox Facebook Company Response*

Source: https://www.facebook.com/redbox accessed on January 17th, 2013

Figure 1-7: *How Nonprofits Implement Social Media*

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Learning by doing	91	91	91	94	89
Observing what others are doing	82	83	83	86	78
Reading online resources	70	63	76	78	83
Talking to colleagues	61	60	63	69	51
Attending classes (in person and online)	47	41	53	55	54
Talking to experts	43	39	41	47	52
Attending social media conferences	26	20	28	35	43
Reading books	22	17	22	30	35
Hired an expert on staff	15	9	13	31	43
Hired a consultant or firm and outsourcing some all social media functions	11	7	11	13	27

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Figure 1-8: *Reasons for Using Social Media Based on Size of Organization*

	Total	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M- $9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Build/maintain awareness of the organization, its cause	92	94	94	92
Build and maintain community	76	79	76	77
Increase traffic to website	68	68	72	74
Advocacy	44	35	48	49
Raise money	43	38	43	46
Mobilize and coordinate people	39	40	42	38
Recruitment (e.g. staff, volunteers, board)	32	31	32	38
Cause Marketing	31	27	67	71
Reduce spending on marketing	28	31	32	19
Increase search engine rankings	23	24	21	22
Program delivery	21	21	21	19
Sell product / services	17	21	14	18
Test effectiveness	14	15	15	17
Market research	11	12	9	7
Crisis management tool	6	3	5	10
Other (please specify)	5	8	5	4

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Figure 1-9: *Frequency of Doing Social Media Based on Hours Spent Per Week on Social Media*

	Total	Hours Per Week Spent on Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Tweet / retweet					
Daily or More Often	39	22	45	55	60
Weekly or More Often	66	54	60	70	83
Publish your own written content on a website or blog					
Daily or More Often	18	11	22	22	22
Weekly or More Often	52	38	45	60	73
Update your organization's profile on a social media site					
Daily or More Often	17	10	18	24	29
Weekly or More Often	41	34	41	46	51
Comment on other people's blogs					
Daily or More Often	8	4	9	10	11
Weekly or More Often	23	13	26	34	23
Create / upload video to web					
Daily or More Often	4	2	3	4	5
Weekly or More Often	16	8	18	20	24

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Figure 1-10: *Median Number of Friends, Followers, Connections, etc. Based on Hours Spent Per Week on Social Media*

	TOTAL	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
Facebook	430	260	470	960	2500
Twitter	290	180	310	930	930
LinkedIn	100	100	130	190	200
In-house discussion group / forum	160	100	140	210	400

	TOTAL	Use Social Media:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
Facebook	430	200	590	810
Twitter	290	100	320	660
LinkedIn	100	100	120	200
In-house discussion group / forum	160	130	120	220

	TOTAL	Revenue:		
		< $999K	$1M-9.9M	$10M+
Facebook	430	260	530	690
Twitter	290	200	250	540
LinkedIn	100	120	100	100
In-house discussion group / forum	160	100	170	200

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
Facebook	430	620	610	730
Twitter	290	420	390	460
LinkedIn	100	100	100	120
In-house discussion group / forum	160	200	210	160

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Figure 1-11: *Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Efforts, Current Social Media Budget: 2010*

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Hours Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	42	42	28	19	8
5%-24%	42	47	48	51	54
25% +	16	11	24	30	39
Median	10	8	13	14	19

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
None	16	11	5	4
LESS THAN 5%	42	48	30	21
5%-24%	42	42	50	53
25% +	16	10	21	25
Median	10	7	11	14

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M- $9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	42	37	44	46
5%-24%	42	39	44	46
25% +	16	24	12	8
Median	10	13	9	8

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund-raising	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	42	26	26	26
5%-24%	42	51	56	55
25% +	16	23	19	19
Median	10	13	12	12

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Figure 1-12: *Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Efforts, Projected Social Media Budget: 2011*

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Hours Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	21	12	11	4
5%-24%	49	58	43	51	50
25% +	28	21	45	38	46
Median (Excluding 0)	16	13	20	21	24

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	20	15	15
5%-24%	49	55	53	48
25% +	28	25	32	37
Median	16	14	18	20

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	23	18	27
5%-24%	49	39	56	57
25% +	28	38	26	16
Median	16	21	15	13

Social Media as a Percentage of Total Marketing Effort	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raise	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
LESS THAN 5%	23	12	15	12
5%-24%	49	54	50	58
25% +	28	34	35	31
Median	16	19	19	18

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

Figure 1-13: *Integrating Social Media into Marketing*

	Total	Hours Per Week Doing Social Media:			
		1-4	5-9	10-24	25+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	80	85	90	94

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		< 1 Year	1 Year	2+ Years
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	78	85	89

	TOTAL	Size of Organization:		
		< $999K	$1M-$9.9M	$10M+
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	77	87	86

	TOTAL	Use Social Media For:		
		Fund raise	Advocacy	Cause Marketing
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Social media is integrated with other forms of marketing, advertising and publicity	84	87	89	91

Source: Stengel, Geri. "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional." *Ventureneer* (2010).

APPENDIX B: IRB IMPLIED INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Implied Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research

The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project: *Social Media as an Aid to Market Nonprofit Organizations*

                                   Principal Investigator: *Kelsey Bonsell, Undergraduate Student,*
                                   Advertising, College of Communications, Penn State University
                                   (610) 349-1581
                                   300 S. Pugh Street Apt 202 State College PA 16801
                                   kbonsell@gmail.com

                                   Advisor: *George Anghelcev, PhD., Assistant Professor, Advertising &*
                                   PR College of Communications, Penn State University
                                   (814) 865-4354
                                   University Park, PA 16802 Office: 315 A Willard Building,
                                   gua4@psu.edu

1. **Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of The Pennsylvania State University IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon's (THON) social media accounts through the leaders who have worked directly with the accounts.

2. **Procedures to be followed:** You will be asked to answer approximately 28 questions about your use and involvement with the Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon's social media accounts.

3. **Duration/Time:** The interview will be one session and will take 30 minutes or less.

4. **Statement of Confidentiality:** Your participation in this research is not confidential.

However, in the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, only the year you were active as well as your position will be linked to your responses unless requested otherwise.

5. **Right to Ask Questions:** Please contact Kelsey Bonsell at (610) 349-1581 or kbonsell@gmail.com with questions or concerns about this study.

6. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study.

Confirming your interview implies that you have read the information in this form and consent to take part in the research. Please keep this form for your records or future reference.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

What was your position within THON (ex: Captain, Overall)? Include the years associated with each position.

What was your involvement with the THON Twitter and or Facebook account?

When were you involved (years) using or working with the account?

Who is in charge of running the accounts? How many people/who has access to post on the accounts?

What kind of handbook is used to train those who use the social media account?

What is included in that handbook?

Has there ever been any training on how to use social media for those who use it (book, website, conference, webinar etc)?

What forms of social media did THON use (while you were active)?

Which forms of social media worked the best (while you were active)?

How much time did you spend using social media for THON weekly (while you were active)?

What advancements were done during the year(s) that you used social media?

Total of the people who use the account, about how much time weekly was put in to social media (while you were active)?

When you were using social media for THON how much money was given for a marketing budget? How much money was distributed for THON to use for social media (promoted posts, tweets, research on who the posts reached)?

What other marketing efforts were used to advertise THON, paid and unpaid (TV commercial, radio etc.)?

Were the marketing efforts on and off social media integrated together (ex. Did the commercial somehow play off of something online?)

Was time spent looking at the impact and reach of social media? How was the research done (amount of likes, google analytics, facebook's tools)?

How often did the Facebook/Twitter account tweet or post per day? What was your goal of amount of times per day?

How did you deal with responding to comments/tweets from the community?

Did you respond/retweet/comment on posts from individuals on the pages?

How often/what percent of communication from others did THON try to respond to?

Who are the social media accounts targeted to (PSU students, THON volunteers, outside community, families)?

Is that audience different on different social media forms?

If you had to decide what the main goal of social media for THON, what would it be?

Out of these items which would you say THON social media tries to accomplish (bold the items if THON tries to accomplish it)?

> Build/maintain awareness of the organization, its cause
> build and maintain community
> increase traffic to www.THON.org
> advocacy
> raise money
> mobilize and coordinate people
> recruitment (staff, volunteers, board)
> cause marketing
> reduce spending on marketing
> increase search engine rankings
> program delivery
> sell products/services
> test effectiveness
> market research
> crisis management

What are some of the barriers that occurred when working with social media?

What were some of the positives associated with THON using social media (while you were active)?

What were some of the negatives associated with THON using social media (while you were active)?

What recommendations do you have, about THON's current usage of social media currently?

APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1 Please write your age below, in numbers only (e.g., 19)

2 Please state your gender.
○ Male
○ Female

3 Have you ever been involved with Penn State's THON (IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon) in any capacity? (e.g., Visitor, Donor, Four Diamonds Family, Student etc.)
○ Yes
○ No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

4 How long (in years) has it been since you were first involved in THON, in any capacity including as a student visitor (e.g., 2 or 6)?

5 Which of the following BEST describes your involvement in this year's THON (2013)?
○ Committee member
○ Captain
○ Overall
○ None of the above

6 Which of the following BEST describes your involvement in this year's THON (2013)? (choose only one)
○ Greek Organization
○ Special Interest Organization
○ General Organization
○ Commonwealth Campus
○ Special Mission Campus
○ Independent Dancer
○ I am part of a 4 Diamonds Family
○ I am a parent of a Penn State Student
○ I am a Penn State Alumni
○ I am a donor
○ Other
○ I am not affiliated with any group

7 How do you PRIMARILY check or use social media? Choose the one method you use most often for each social media platform.

	Computer	Cell Phone	Both (Equal time checking on computer and cell phone)	Do not check at all
Facebook	○	○	○	○
Twitter	○	○	○	○
Instagram	○	○	○	○
LinkedIn	○	○	○	○
Pinterest	○	○	○	○
YouTube	○	○	○	○
Foursquare	○	○	○	○
Google+	○	○	○	○
Tumblr	○	○	○	○
Blogs	○	○	○	○
Flickr	○	○	○	○
Storify	○	○	○	○
Viddy	○	○	○	○
Vine	○	○	○	○

8 Approximately, how many times DAILY do you use or check each of the following social media channels? Please write answer in numbers only, if less than one time a day answer 0.
    Facebook
    Twitter

9 Approximately, how many times WEEKLY do you use or check each of the following social media channels? Please write answer in numbers only, if less than one time a week answer 0.
    Instagram
    LinkedIn
    Pinterest
    YouTube
    Foursquare
    Google+
    Tumblr
    Blogs
    Flickr
    Storify
    Viddy
    Vine

10 Approximately how many friends do you have on Facebook? If you do not have a Facebook account, type 0.

11 Approximately how long have you had a Facebook account, in years (e.g., 4 or 3.5) ?

12 Approximately how many followers do you have on Twitter? If you do not have a Twitter account, type 0.

13 Approximately how many **companies/brands** do you follow on Twitter? If you do not have a Twitter account, type 0.

14 Approximately how many **people** do you follow on Twitter? If you do not have a Twitter account, type 0.

15 Approximately how long have you had a Twitter account, in years (e.g., 2.25 or 3) ?

16 On the scales below, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following questions?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My friends come to me for advice when it comes to social activities	○	○	○	○	○	○
Compared to other people in my circle of friends, I am less likely to be asked about student or extracurricular activities	○	○	○	○	○	○

17 In your opinion, how important are each of the following in getting information about THON? (drag the sliders to indicate importance from 1 - not at all important to 10 - extremely important)
_____ Word of mouth from friends or acquaintances
_____ News outlets (e.g., Onward State, The Daily Collegian, Center Daily Times etc.)
_____ THON organization you are a part of
_____ Official THON social media accounts (@THON, Penn State Dance Marathon)
_____ Overall, Captain, or Committee Member (via meetings or emails)

18 Communication about THON has been focused on various topics. In your case personally, how successful was each of the following topics when it came to stimulating your interest in THON.

	Very Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Somewhat Unsuccessful	Somewhat Successful	Successful	Very Successful
Posts about family affected by cancer (family stories)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Posts including personal testimonies from students involved	○	○	○	○	○	○
Posts including numbers and statistics	○	○	○	○	○	○
Posts reflecting school spirit associated with THON	○	○	○	○	○	○
Posts including compelling pictures	○	○	○	○	○	○
Posts including compelling videos	○	○	○	○	○	○
Posts about individual children who benefited from THON	○	○	○	○	○	○

19 Rate each of the following in terms of their influence in getting you involved with THON's social media accounts. (drag the sliders to indicate importance from 1 - not at all influential to 10 - very influential)

_____ Friends
_____ Tweet, post, retweet or share that you saw about THON
_____ Overall, Captain or Committee
_____ Internet search or search on social media platforms
_____ THON weekend
_____ Television (news or advertisement)
_____ Radio (news or advertisement)
_____ State College News Source (e.g., Onward State, The Daily Collegian, Center Daily Times etc.)
_____ Penn State Alumni
_____ A THON organization you are a part of

20 Do you follow @THON on Twitter?
❍ Yes
❍ No

Answer If Do you follow @THON on Twitter? Yes Is Selected

21 Indicate why do you follow the official THON Twitter account. (@THON)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
To receive information about upcoming events	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn about fundraising	○	○	○	○	○	○
To find out about Four Diamonds Families (stories)	○	○	○	○	○	○
To get information during THON weekend	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I am a Committee Member, Captain or Overall	○	○	○	○	○	○
To be inspired by the organization's doings	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn about volunteer/service opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn about THON and THON's history	○	○	○	○	○	○
To show support for the organization (add to their follower base)	○	○	○	○	○	○

22 Do you "Like" Penn State Dance Marathon on Facebook?
○ Yes
○ No

Answer If Do you follow Penn State Dance Marathon on Facebook? Yes Is Selected

23 Indicate why do you "Like" the official THON Facebook Account. (Penn State Dance Marathon)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
To receive information about upcoming events	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn about fundraising	○	○	○	○	○	○
To find out about Four Diamonds Families (stories)	○	○	○	○	○	○
To get information during THON weekend	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because I am a Committee Member, Captain or Overall	○	○	○	○	○	○
To be inspired by the organization's doings	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn about volunteer/service opportunities	○	○	○	○	○	○
To learn about THON and THON's history	○	○	○	○	○	○
To show support for the organization (add to their follower base)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Answer If Do you follow @THON on Twitter? Yes Is Selected Or Do you "Like" Penn State Dance Marathon on Facebook? Yes Is Selected

24 On the official THON social media (Twitter: @THON, Facebook: Penn State Dance Marathon), what kind of posts do you remember seeing this year? Please check all that apply.
- Retweets or shares
- Photos

- Videos
- Press releases
- Press coverage
- Purely informational content
- Questions directed to THON's friends/followers
- Facts about the cause (ex: cancer facts)
- Audio
- Graphics (charts, infographics etc.)
- Hyperlinks
- How to donate to THON
- Quotes
- Post to join a hashtag
- Behind the scenes information (things you would normally not have access to without following the account)
- THON's mission
- How to get involved
- Contests or giveaways
- None of these

25 In the last year, roughly how many times did you TWEET on Twitter about THON? If none, type 0.

26 In the last year, roughly how many times did you RETWEET on Twitter about THON? If none, type 0.

27 In the last year, roughly how many times did you POST on Facebook about THON? If none, type 0.

28 In the last year, roughly how many times did you SHARE something on Facebook about THON? If none, type 0.

29 If you communicated with THON's Facebook account Penn State Dance Marathon, how likely were you to get a response back (e.g., a response to a post on their Facebook page, a like on your post, a response to your comment etc? If you have not interacted with THON's Penn State Dance Marathon Page skip this question.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unlikely:Very Likely	○	○	○	○	○	○

30 If you communicated with THON's Twitter account @THON, how likely were you to get a response back (e.g., a tweet back from @THON, a retweet, a direct message etc.)? If you have

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Unlikely:Very Likely	○	○	○	○	○	○

not interacted with the @THON Twitter account skip this question.

31 Approximately how many times during this current THON year has THON social media (Twitter: @THON and Facebook: Penn State Dance Marathon) asked for feedback or recommendations? If zero times, write 0.

32 Indicate how successful have you found THON's Facebook account (Penn State Dance Marathon) in regards to the following:

	Extremely Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Somewhat Unsuccessful	Somewhat Successful	Successful	Extremely Successful
Making THON transparent (i.e. providing all information to the public, not hiding any information)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helping you learn about what is going on with THON	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing a way for THON and the public to interact	○	○	○	○	○	○

33 Indicate how successful have you found THON's Twitter account (@THON) in regards to the following:

	Extremely Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Somewhat Unsuccessful	Somewhat Successful	Successful	Extremely Successful
Making THON transparent (i.e. providing all information to the public, not hiding any information)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Helping you learn about what is going on with THON	○	○	○	○	○	○
Providing a way for THON and the public to interact	○	○	○	○	○	○

34 How many times did you go on Facebook during THON to check in about events happening or find information about THON? If zero, type 0.

If How many times did you go o... Is Equal to 0, Then Skip To How many times did you go on Twitter ...

35 If you did check Facebook during THON, where did you PRIMARILY get your information from?
○ THON's official account: Penn State Dance Marathon
○ Friend's Facebook posts
○ Other Facebook account

36 How many times did you go on Twitter during THON to check in about events happening or find information about THON? If zero, type 0.

If How many times did you go o... Is Equal to 0, Then Skip To Do you regularly follow THON social m...

37 If you did check Twitter during THON, where did you PRIMARILY get your information from?
- ○ THON's official account: @THON
- ○ Friend's Tweets
- ○ Other Twitter account

38 Do you regularly follow THON social media during times other than THON weekend?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To I find THON's Facebook communication
Answer If Do you regularly follow THON social medi... Yes Is Selected

39 How well do you believe THON's Twitter account (@THON) follows all of the events that happen throughout the year other than THON weekend?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Poorly:Extremely Well	○	○	○	○	○	○

Answer If Do you regularly follow THON social medi... Yes Is Selected

40 How well do you believe THON's Facebook account (Penn State Dance Marathon) follows all of the events that happen throughout the year other than THON weekend?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Very Poorly:Extremely Well	○	○	○	○	○	○

41 I find THON's Facebook communication

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Informative	○	○	○	○	○	○
Useful	○	○	○	○	○	○
Entertaining	○	○	○	○	○	○
Motivating	○	○	○	○	○	○

42 I find THON's Twitter communication

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Informative	○	○	○	○	○	○
Useful	○	○	○	○	○	○
Entertaining	○	○	○	○	○	○
Motivating	○	○	○	○	○	○

43 In regards to THON's social media accounts (Twitter: @THON and Facebook: Penn State Dance Marathon) briefly mention what do you think is missing from what THON did and what would you like to see in the future. We would appreciate as much detail as possible. If nothing, skip this question.

44 Briefly mention what do you think is missing from what THON did this calendar year and changes you would like to see in the future in regards to all aspects of THON. We would appreciate as much detail as possible. If nothing, skip this question.

APPENDIX E: QUALITATIVE DATA CHARTS

Chart 4-1

Answer		Response	%
Committee member		91	35.271%
Captain		18	6.977%
Overall		2	0.775%
None		147	56.977%
Total		258	

Chart 4-2
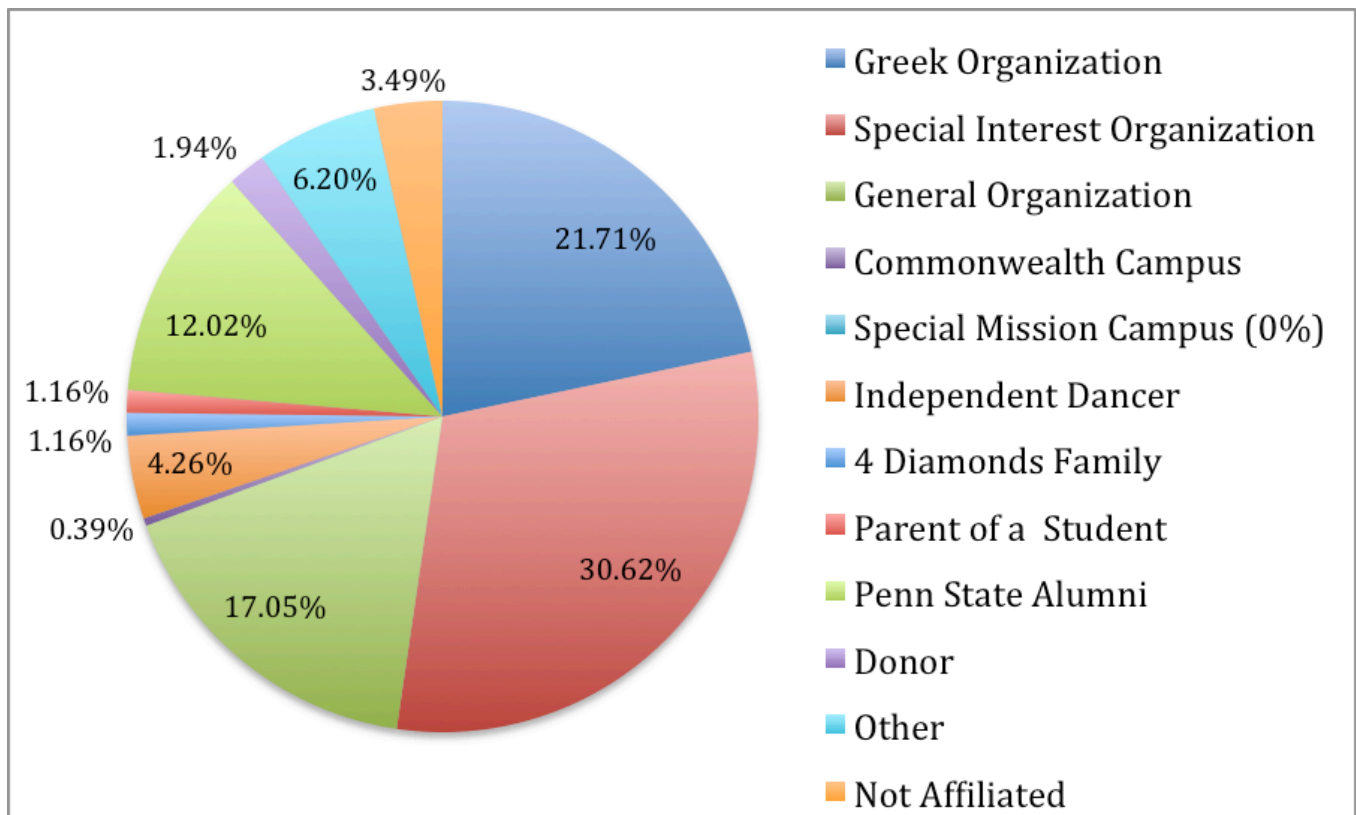
Chart 4-3

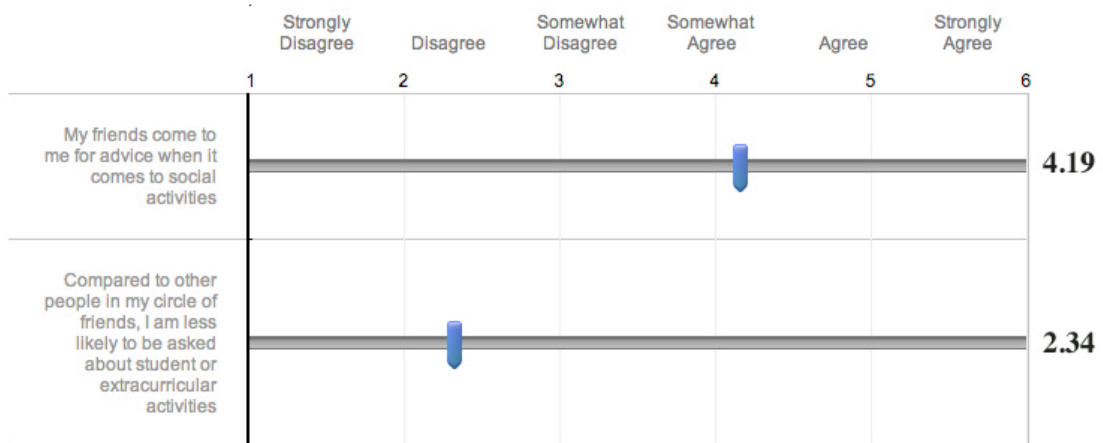| Platform Checked more than once a week	Times checked weekly
Instagram	9.48
YouTube	5.82
Pinterest	4.17
Tumblr	2.81
Google+	1.08
Blogs	1.02
LinkedIn	1.01
Foursquare	0.82
Vine	0.08
Flickr	0.03
Storify	0.01
Viddy	0.01

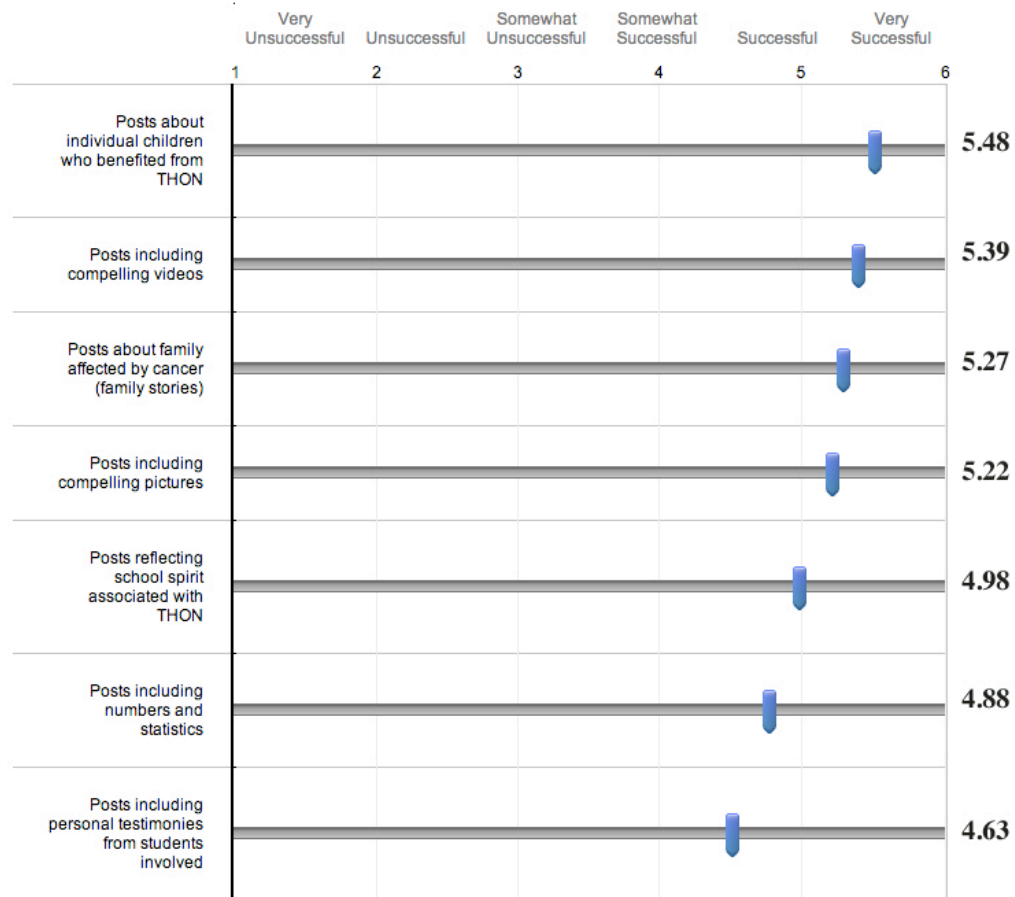Chart 4-4

Chart 4-5

Chart 4-6

Where user gets information about THON	Level of importance (1-10)
THON organization you are a part of	8.64
Word of mouth from friends or acquaintances	8.03
Official THON social media accounts (@THON, Penn State Dance Marathon)	7.88
Local news outlets (e.g., Onward State, The Daily Collegian, Center Daily Times etc.)	7.05
Overall, Captain, or Committee Member (via meetings or emails)	6.96

APPENDIX F: THON SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNITY GUIDLINES

THON Social Media Community Guidelines:

THON would be nothing without its dedicated volunteers and supporters. This Facebook page is intended to be an open forum, but THON is always FTK, so there are some rules.

Comments will be removed if they contain:
•Profane, defamatory, offensive, or violent language – keep it FTK!
•Attacks on specific groups of any comments meant to harass, threaten, or abuse an individual
•Hateful comments regarding race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation or political beliefs
•Links or comments containing explicit content material
•Discussion of illegal activity
•Spam, link baiting, or files containing viruses that could damage other individual's computers or mobile devices
•Violations of copyright or intellectual property rights
•Content determined to be inappropriate, in poor taste, or otherwise contrary to the purposes of THON's Facebook page
•Personal promotion

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please contact the Public Relations Overall at public.relations@thon.org!

APPENDIX G: OPEN RESPONSE THON DATA

Briefly mention what do you think is missing from what THON did this calendar year and changes you would like to see in the future in regards to all aspects of THON.
More of a play by play of THON weekend in "bad" situations. For example explaining the problem with the pass lists or the doors closing to avoid conflict and anger among participants.
While THON is transparent in regards to how the money is spent, I believe that THON needs to be more transparent in regards to how THON Weekend actually runs. There were many issues this year with the pass list and capacity and people weren't sure why this was happening. Asking a Captain or committee member didn't answer questions but rather added to the confusion as every person had a different answer. The Overall did send an email to THON chairs letting them know that capacity had been maxed, but that did not explain why the stands were less filled than last year or why so many people were stuck outside in the freezing cold without being told what was happening. THON could be more transparent by explaining these issues throughout the weekend via their social media platforms and then explain them in depth after the weekend via a press release or blog post that they could spread through their social media platforms. By not doing this, they left room for volunteers, supporters, and those with unfavorable opinions of THON to make judgments and assumptions that only led to more confusion and sometimes bitterness.
Pass list regulation.
Clearer communication before THON weekend about what to expect in terms of pass lines and the building reaching capacity, as well as alternative options to watching THON coverage if people can't get in the building. This is always an issue every year but if THON is proactive and says "the BJC will officially be at capacity when the building reaches this number of occupants. Committee members and Entertainment acts will be the only people allowed in once capacity is reached. If the BJC is at capacity, the THON webcast will be shown at these locations." That way it can kind of curtail questions like "well if the building is at capacity why is Morale still allowed in" and it would also provide better options for people other than wasting time standing in line and missing out on THON coverage that they could see if they were watching the webcast somewhere like at the HUB.
I think one thing that was lacking this year were ideas to combat the huge amount of crowds that showed up to THON. Every year THON's growth is exponential and every year I feel like we are unprepared. I think we should start planning for the growth to help make sure the dancers, four diamonds families, dancer families, and everyone involved has a fantastic experience. I think next year it would be a good idea to utilize the pegula ice arena that will most likely be finished to house people that cannot fit into the BJC. They could play THON on a big screen and this would avoid risk of hypothermia by standing outside in the cold.
I truly think that the pit needs to come back during THON. it was a great way to pass things to dancers without having to get into the pass line. It also was nice for parents or friends who are not as involved in THON to see their dancer without having to figure out everything dealing with the technical parts of THON
I would like to see things throughout the summer.
Better PASS system, better update on lines outside the BJC. Better control over systems - sometimes R&R said they wouldn't let us back into our section if we left, even for the bathroom. It got better though, they started using bathroom passes. But still a nuisance in the beginning.
Improve the organization of the pass list system.
Fix the pass list system!!
I think THON should have more of a national presence than what it is. I understand it is difficult to make that happen, but there is no reason it should not receive more recognition. In Pennsylvania it is a known thing, but if it made headlines across the country, who knows what could happen.
I'm sure this will be a major issue that is going to be resolved, but in regards to the BJC's capacity there were many things that could have been handled better. I had the honor of dancing this year, but unfortunately my family couldn't access the floor at any point and even couldn't get into the BJC Sunday morning when I really needed them. I think there should be a system similar to the THON families where the dancer's parents are accounted for in the BJC capacity. That way they can access at any point without being turned away. You can limit the dancer's list to 2 people so it doesn't exceed BJC capacity.
what the committees are doing, maybe like an org of the week
I would like to see THON be more responsive to the public and more transparent in the way things are run.

i think there needs to be more ways to get involved. THON was so crazy this year, and we need to make THON weekend more functional. since people could not come see what THON looked like over the weekend due to the lines, there might be a disheartening and resentment towards it.

The exit strategy this year for the dancers was absolutely HORRENDOUS! Everything about it. Also, dancers have way too many people on their pass lists. Dancers generally only need/want to see a couple of people and its logistically impossible for all of the people on pass lists to even get on the floor, so it just backs up the line unnecessarily. It's terrible that no one could get on the floor for the dancers almost all of Saturday and that people, especially families and dancer's parents, had to wait in line for 5 hours. Additionally, the crowd control outside of the BJC towards the end of THON was not handled well. So many dancers' families didn't get in for the last 4 hours and it was very disorganized. People broke into a mad dash when another gate was opened and people who had been waiting in the cold for hours were then in the back of the line.

Pass System, communication with families, communications with alumni, and taking opinions from previous captains, families and certain parties involved in THON previously. Too much focus is on who are students now. Alumni probably have great ideas that they would share to the current overall committee about how to change things or make things better. They've been through it and hey it's only ideas. Branch out!

Logistics regarding seating, capacity, etc.

I believe there should be less Rules and Regulations committee members as well as OPP committee members because they take up too much space, both on the concourse and on the floor. I also believe the pass system needs some kinks worked out in order for families to be able to get down onto the floor to see their kids that are dancing.

I think a great thing would be to pinpoint where THON canners are going to be. Maybe utilize check-ins and Foursquare more? Knowing where orgs and canners are will be helpful

I'd scrap Chords for a Cure - I heard they lost money on it and I'm sure it's true - $35 to see 2 bands no one cares about? I'd rather 100 Days be more of a celebration too - something that would draw NEW people to hang out in the HUB and enjoy it. As it stands, it's all Captains and Committee members in there celebrating which is cool but isn't the whole point.

THON needs to make sure that dancer families are guaranteed time on the floor with their kids dancing. In addition, THON should reduce the size of the R&R committee and possibly the OPP committee as well in order to eliminate some of the capacity problems associated with guaranteeing committee members access to the BJC.

I believe they could get the organizations more involved in the other activities such as family carnival. I feel that these events are primarily focused on involvement with THON committees and not so much with orgs. I feel like may people in orgs would enjoy being a part of more events such as this, or at least more notified that they are allowed to and what they can do at these events.   Random thought, but a freeze mob, opposite of a flash mob, would be an awesome cool thing to do at THON.

I would like to see greater recognition for Special Interest Organizations and the work that we do. We are clubs who are dedicated entirely to THON, yet many people know more about and show greater respect to committee positions or greek organizations, for example.

more committees allowing more people to feel directly connected to THON

More Overall and Captain transparency with committees and THON participants. Being a THON Overall and Captain is a great honor, but they should be treated equally with other THON participants.

Publicity and transparency. Its is difficult to understand how THON works (for example how hard it was to get in to the BJC, and why Rules and Reg does certain things). It is offputting and disappointing to not be able to experience THON in person.

Great Year. R&R rocks.

Have merchandise available more often. I missed multiple Merch sales because of class/sleep/other priorities.

The floor pass system needs to be addressed. Too many people who should've had access to the floor were denied the opportunity. Also some of the committee members need to be better utilized THON weekend. R&R has so many people just standing around and they are usually (and unfortunately) rude.

Sharing more positive stories/interacting with Four Diamonds Families on Facebook. Specifically, promoting the Facebook or carepages accounts of different families so others can follow along with their journeys.

Can't think of anything

Parents of dancers need to be allowed in for the final four hours.

More breakdown on where the funds go. Get a very famous person to speak to the crowd via video.

#1 thing!!!! The students from organizations that worked so hard over the past year need to be assured admittance. The family relations chair from my daughters org could not get in at all on Sunday and she was on the finale pass. She canned every weekend, spent countless hours working towards their goal, spend a lot of time communicating with their family and she was

devastated that she could not get in. #2 Families of dancers who are expecting our support should be allowed in. Even if it's at a particular time, and only for a brief time, at least we can lend our support. We spent over $1000 that weekend to sit in a hotel, money that could have went to THON had we known we could not get to see our daughter and then not get in! One family I saw drove from North Carolina with two small children standing out in the cold 4am Sunday morning. They did not get in. We were emailed to come before 6...we did and still did not make in. It's great that it's so popular, but very frustrating for those of use who came so far.

Pull larger corporation partners in to help promote ie hospitals, American cancer association etc

As THON gets bigger and bigger, more and more people want to get involved through a committee. We don't have enough spots for these people, and sometimes that makes them not want to be involved. THON should mention Special interest orgs. We work incredibly hard throughout the year and raise more money than committees as well as have a personal connection with the families. Being on a committee doesn't necessarily ensure these things. I would love to see THON encourage more students to join SI orgs

They shouldn't have three canning trips scheduled so close together in the calendar year.

I would reduce the size of R and R to allow for more visitors in the BJC, you do not need 50 plus people holding a roped off section, it can be greatly reduce to improve effectiveness and help with capacity issues. ALSO OPP and R &R can probably be combined, many opp committees have shifts in which they are just hanging out on the floor (not cleaning or removing trash) which can create an issue with the past system. ALSO ADD THE PIT AGAIN!!!!!!! it was helpful for the dancers whose parents who could not get on the floor, due to pass/capacity issues and this year the lack of it really created a struggle.

Get the alumni more involved.

try to inform families more of events that are going on throughout the year because some families may not be aware that they are taking place and may feel that they are missing out. Also, maybe have more young adult events so that they feel more of an interaction.

Pass list changes.

I wasn't particularly close to THON activity this year (aging alumnus), so I don't have any constructive (or negative) feedback.

I feel like the independent dancer drawing should be live streamed. It's very weird that it is done on a computer and behind the scenes. I danced this year through an org, but find that independent dancer drawing should be live streamed or video taped.

Improve system for building capacity, possible integrating a ticketing system for the event.

I wish there was still a 4th canning weekend; I'm a member of Atlas, and although we had a record-breaking year, imagine how much more we could have raised for THON if we had still had a 4th canning weekend.

THON Weekend needs to communicate better with fundraising organizations and the event itself needs to be run more efficiently.

APPENDIX H: OPEN RESPONSE SOCIAL MEDIA THON DATA

In regards to THON's social media accounts briefly mention what do you think is missing from what THON did and what would you like to see in the future?

Contests for free merch

The Twitter page is extremely successful, and I think Facebook could be more detail.

THON does not promote organizations' (Greek, special interest, general, or independent dancers) fundraising events or achievements. While I know this is hard to do since there are many organizations and each is doing good deeds, I believe that sometimes organizations feel that THON puts a greater emphasis on committee members and Captains and ignores how hard organizations work and how critical they are to THON's total and spreading the word about THON.

More pictures of the actual event....dancers, what's going on on stage, the stands. As the venue gets more crowded and more people are denied access, pictures on social media accounts are crucial to helping everyone feel connected to the event. Also, parents and friends at home want to see pictures of their college student.

More interacting with their followers and contests

I feel like both social media channels could do more to promote what the organizations and committees are doing throughout the year, whether it's highlighting specific events, focusing on students from each committee or type of org, talking about other ways the mission of THON is carried out through DMAIG, Mini THONs, and commonwealth campus activities.

More personal stories and highlights of students actively involved with THON to motivate other students.

THON needs to do more user engaging content. Ask questions that will guarantee answers that will benefit the organization whether it be through gaining more followers or getting feedback.

More frequent posts with small, retweetable facts or motivational quotes. They're great at posting important things, but I think they could benefit from more frequent posts.

I would like to see more accurate updates regarding lines (pass line, entrance to BJC). The growing members of the THON community need to know if it is worth their time to wait in line to get into THON or to get onto the floor. If they were better updated during THON weekend, I feel that lines and other problems would have been less dramatic.

I would like to see more videos and stories of families and I would like to have it more widespread throughout the country.

More striking statistics, they all blend together sometimes and create an environment of apathy.

If there's any way that THON social media could communicate with other PSU social media outlets (Onward State, The School Philly) so that silly rumors aren't spread (eg: the line and being at capacity during this year's THON, or shots at R&R for "not knowing what they're doing" with PASS) that would be great.

More communication during THON weekend would have been beneficial so people knew what was going on, especially during times when doors were shut or people had questions about capacity.

a broader range of aspects of THON

This year in particular, there was very little communication about what was happening with the capacity at the BJC. Almost all information on that front came from other accounts, such as Onward State. Also, I noticed that many people tweeted at the THON account or wrote on the THON facebook page during THON weekends with questions about how to donate or whether or not they had to pay to get into the BJC. Those people never received responses.

fewer posts- too much info can be overwhelming

Better communication during THON weekend regarding BJC capacity levels, lines, wait times, etc.

More information on what is going on at other campuses other than UP. I have friends at Behrend and they hold a mini THON called 24 For a Cure every October and are never mentioned. I think more information like that could help all involved with THON as well as getting this information out to new students.

More updates on Four Diamonds kids and families.

Personalization! I know a lot of people tweet and retweet and comment on facebook but a reply from a captain, committee member or designated person might me nice to keep people in the loop and to feel connected.

more communication regarding seating, logistics, etc. THON weekend. maybe even creating a separate account specifically for THON weekend attendees

I think they should post more photos from all the different events leading up to THON. I think this will inspire more people to be involved.

I guess more interaction would be great just so I know that you are not just spewing out facts but also taking the time to share moments with those involved/affected by this great event

It needs to be more professional and informative. For Spring Break 2012, it tweeted that the Overall Committee was wearing their warmup suits to Jamaica - why? Who cares about that? It needs to not glorify its volunteers but thank them instead, promote its cause and give as much inside information as possible. Most volunteers have never cleaned mats or cans - show us pictures of that. Show us pictures of the Morale Captains at line dance retreat up until 7 am writing. Show us pictures of R&R cutting and laminating passes. Show us pictures of PR organizing their timeline, DAR handing out orange ties or benefitting - NOTHING should be a secret. Being a Captain should not be a perk - I hated when I became a Captain and learned all of these pointless secrets and insider information - everyone should know it from the beginning! Especially when it's all harmless information that will either make them appreciate THON and its efforts more OR make them understand its benefits and drawbacks and brainstorm solutions. We can never move forward if we continue to hide pointless information from volunteers. The Twitter and Facebook should carefully document every single event leading up to THON so people know how much students at PSU do to make this event happen - especially the students themselves!

THON needed to be more transparent on its facebook and twitter pages about the BJC being at capacity.

They didn't update twitter that much during the weekend and there was a lot of confusion about when the BJC was at capacity. If THON told us officially we wouldn't have to rely on hearsay and rumors about whether or not you'd be able to get in.

I would like to see more interaction with people that are involved in THON. as a dancer I didnt really communicate with them I simply used them to gain information before and after. Maybe some sort of way for them to post information or send you information as a dancer so that you could get it without seeing what time it was or how much time had passed since something else happened.

More family stories could help to motivate volunteers who follow THON

More tweets could be used. Twitter should be used much more than facebook because it is something that constantly updates, as facebook posts are more spaced out.

The accounts are great for throughout the year, however when it came down to actual THON weekend, the accounts were seriously lacking. There were a ton of problems with the BJC and the only way to get that information was through Onward State, The Collegian, etc. Nothing from the THON sites themselves. I think that really, really needs to be updated.

I don't use twitter.

Personally, I just like going onto the social media outlets and seeing a wealth of fun things. So as many videos as possible. As many pictures. I enjoy the feeling of being flooded with THON similarly to the feeling you get when you walk onto the floor.

let people know when the BJC is at capacity and the likelihood of them getting in if they wait in a ridiculous line.

Talk more about the families, updates on the kids, etc.

They should provide better information as different situations develop THON weekend. For example, when the floor is closed or when the BJC reaches capacity. They do a good job all year managing the account. But the social media accounts should be utilized THON weekend to help relay information to people on the move, waiting in line, etc.

I am the Social Media Captain who manages the Twitter & Facebook, so sorry if some of my answers seemed to be outliers. I think one thing I wanted to do more was educate about pediatric cancer. During the year, it got extremely hectic with fundraisers and sending out information to volunteers, but I am pushing my successor to focus on that as well.

I would love to see more interaction with fans/followers. More user-submitted content (THON around the world is one of my favorite things on the Facebook account).

Nothing

THON weekend this year was frustrating! I wish THON made better use of social media to keep us updated. We traveled four hours to watch our daughter dance and could not get in. At one point on Saturday the loud speakers outside was saying

BJC was filled to capacity, yet people were walking right in.
More frequent posts/tweets
I think social media should have been utilized during THON Weekend to communicate with people trying to enter the BJC during high capacity times i.e. letting them know about wait times or when the doors were closed. One thing I enjoyed this year from THON's social media was the use of quotes and infographics.
THON social media accounts would be more successful if they used them to spread word about the ENTIRE THON community, not just the events put on by THON itself. Helping organizations spread the word of successes and certain things they have going on throughout the entire year will help organizations feel as they are a part of the THON community even more.
More self promotion traditional media TV prior to the event billboards posters
Retweets to other individuals, not just overalls / captains
Try to make the posts more appealing. More pictures or interactions. Also some information was not updated. I don't have a twitter so I can't help with information on improving this.
I personally don't use Facebook and especially Twitter enough to say.
I think that the Twitter account does a better job at informing people and getting information to a large number of people. Posts on Facebook can become wordy and bogged down with people's comments and personal statements, which is a good thing, but it distracts people from the quality of the posts.
The only reason I know anything about THON is that my granddaughter is heavily involved in it. I live hundreds of miles away and have no other connection to Penn State. Sorry/
There is general favoritism as to who was retweeted. The same people were retweeted over and over again.
A better way to deal with lines and the amount of people who come
More updates on the lines (Floor pass and line to get in)
More opportunities for the public to interact (questions, surveys, etc.)
I wasn't particularly close to THON activity this year (aging alumnus), so I don't have any constructive (or negative) feedback.
More mentions and retweets from people who mention THON, even if not highly involved.
THON's official Facebook and Twitter accounts should better cover organizations' THON fundraisers throughout the year.

APPENDIX I: CORRELATION DATA

The affect of age and involvement:

The older an individual is:

- The fewer friends a person has on Facebook. (-.251)

- The less interested they are by statistics THON posts on social media. (-.139)

- The less interested they are in pictures THON posts on social media. (-.133)

- The less likely they are to get involved in social media because of THON weekend. (.128)

- The longer they have been involved in any aspect with THON. (.339)

- The more likely they are to follow more brands on Twitter. (.128)

The longer the person is involved with THON:

- The more times they check blogs per week. (.134)

Social media use by THON community:

Twitter

The more times a person checks Twitter:

- The longer the person has had a Twitter account. (.341)

- The more brands they follow on Twitter. (.155)

The more followers a person has on Twitter:

- The more often they check LinkedIn. (.35)

- The longer a person has had a Twitter account. (.489)

- The more a person tweets the more they retweet on Twitter. (.336)

Facebook

The more times a person checks Facebook:

- The more a person posts on Facebook. (.296)

- The more friends a person has on Facebook. (.133)

Facebook and Twitter

As one would assume, there are strong correlations between the Facebook and Twitter when it comes to:

- Posts and tweets. (.161)

- How often the platform is checked. (.487)

- Friends and followers. (.357)

- How long they have had the accounts. (.311)

- Tweet and share. (.886)

Other social media platforms

- The more often a person checks Pinterest the more often they check Instagram. (.389)

- The more often a person checks Flikr the more often they check YouTube. (.23)

- The more often a person checks YouTube the more times they check Instagram. (.127)

Social media use concerning THON by the THON community:

Twitter

The more a person tweets about THON:

- The more they find THON Twitters content useful. (.172)

- The more they feel inspired by THON's Twitter content. (.153)

- The more likely a person is to get their information about THON from an Overall,

  Captain or Committee. (.185 about retweets)

The more often a person checks Twitter:

- The more likely they get information about THON from the official THON accounts.

  (.177)

- The more likely they get information about THON from local news outlets. (.151)

- The more companies an individual followed on Twitter, the less likely that person would

  get response back from THON on Twitter. (-.282)

- The longer a person has had Twitter, the more influential a THON Overall, Captain or

  Committee was in getting them involved with the THON social media accounts. (.137)

Facebook

The more a person gets information from the official THON social media accounts:

- The more often a person posts on Facebook. (.169)

- The longer a person had Facebook. (.171)

Facebook and Twitter

- The more likely a person likes Facebook to add to the follower base, the more likely a

  person follows Twitter to add to the follower base (add numbers to their community).

  (.702)

- The more a person shares about THON on Facebook the more likely the person will retweet about THON on Twitter. (.228)

Content on THON Social Media:

What content stimulates interests in people

The more likely that a person is interested in THON videos:

- The more likely they are to feel inspired by the THON Twitter account. (.243)
- The more likely a person is to get their information from the official THON social media accounts. (.219)
- The more they are interested in THON statistics and facts. (.394)
- The more they are interested in posts that show school spirit. (.331)

The more likely a person is interested by Four Diamonds family stories:

- The more they are inspired by the THON twitter account. (.363)
- The more likely a person is to get their information from the official THON social media accounts. (.183)
- The more often a person posts on Facebook about THON. (138)
- The more a person retweets THON. (.147)
- The more likely they get their information about THON from their THON organization. (.264)
- The more interested a person is by student testimony about THON (.567)

The more likely a person is interested in THON pictures:

- The more likely they are to get their information about THON from the official THON accounts. (.282)

- The more often they weekly check Pinterest. (.125)

- The more they are interested in statistics and facts. (.416)

- The more a person is interested in a specific child who benefited from THON. (.433)

The more likely a person is interested in THON statistics and facts:

- The more they are inspired by the THON twitter account. (.323)

- The more likely a person is to get their information from the official THON social media account. (197)

- The more a person posts on Facebook. (.155)

The more a person is interested by student testimonies about THON:

- The more likely a person became involved in social media through their org. (.123)

- The more likely a person gets their information about THON from a news source. (.132)

Why do they follow the official accounts:

The more influential THON weekend is in getting a person involved with the THON social media accounts:

- The more likely they get their information about THON from the official THON social media accounts. (.266)

- The more interested a person is in THON video content. (.147)

- The more interested a person is in THON pictures. (.144)

- The more interested a person is in THON statistics and facts. (.156)

Strategies for using social media as a marketing tool for THON:

Information Dissemination on Facebook

The more successful a person thinks Facebook is at informing him/her about THON:

- The longer a person has had a Facebook account (.151)

- The more a person is interested by Four Diamonds family stories. (.271)

- The more likely a person is to get their information about THON from the official THON
  accounts. (.281)

- The more likely a person is to like the official THON Facebook account to be informed
  about THON fundraising. (.425)

Information Dissemination on Twitter

The more successful a person thinks Twitter is at informing him/her about THON:

- The more a person Tweets. (.16)

Disclosure or Openness (Transparency) on Facebook

The more successful a person thinks Facebook is at keeping THON transparent:

- The more influential a THON Overall, Captain or Committee was in getting them
  involved with the official THON social media accounts. (.157)

- The more interested a person is by Four Diamonds family stories (.253), THON videos
  (.276) or student testimony about THON (.307).

Disclosure or Openness (Transparency) on Twitter

The more successful a person thinks Twitter is at keeping THON transparent:

- The more interested a person is in THON statistics and facts, (.207), THON pictures (.215), THON video (.247), or Four Diamond family stories (.347).

- The more likely a person is to get their information about THON from the official THON social media accounts. (.286)

- The more likely a person is to follow THON to be informed about THON weekend (.353).

Interactivity and Involvement on Facebook

The more successful a person thinks Facebook is at interacting with followers:

- The more influential their THON organization is in getting them involved with the official THON social media accounts. (.157)

Interactivity and Involvement on Twitter

The more successful a person thinks Twitter is at interacting with followers:

- The more a person Tweets (.16) and retweets about THON. (.216)

- The more likely they think that THON's Facebook is transparent (.793) informative (.313).

ACADEMIC VITA

Kelsey Elizabeth Bonsell

2027 Whitehall Ave.
Allentown, PA 18104
kbonsell@gmail.com

Education: B.A., Advertising/Public Relations, Pennsylvania State University, Spring 2013
University Park, PA
Minor in Recreation Parks and Tourism Management
Honors in Advertising/Public Relations

Honors: Graduated with Highest Distinction—Top 2% of graduating class
Kappa Tau Alpha, national honors society
Recipient of the Schreyer Honors College Academic Excellence Scholarship
Recipient of the Wiggins/Fleming Honors Scholarship in Communication
Recipient of the College of Communications Scholarship
Recipient of the Curley Communications Scholarship
Recipient of the Berle C. H. Memorial Scholarship
Recipient of the Lipson Family Scholarship in Communication
Coca-Cola Scholar
TD Bank American Dream Scholar
Second Mile Community Service Scholar

Experience: GiveCorps, Marketing Manager
Second Melody Marketing Agency, Advertising Intern
JanSport, Brand Manager
Spark Advertising and PR Agency, Public Relations Intern
Penn State Intercollegiate Athletics, Marketing Associate

Activities: Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, Street Teams (Promotion) Captain
Omega Phi Alpha, service sorority, Public Relations Executive Board Member
Greek Panhellenic Delegate
Penn State IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon, Publication Management Captain
LifeLink PSU, Mentor
College of Communications Mentor