

Public Relations Plan for Auburn Animal Rescue

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Project Description

A local humane society, Auburn Animal Rescue, would like new ideas for an event to increase puppy adoptions. The event should focus a spotlight on the influx of litters of puppies the organization sees during warm weather months. It's not unusual for the shelter to see as many as 200 animals enter the facility each week. The shelter has approximately 24 kennel dogs, about 20 puppies, and 15 cats, she said. Puppy adopters that arrange to have a pediatric spay or neuter surgery will receive a discounted adoption fee of \$40. Your client wants fresh ideas to get people to the event and to increase adoptions. What will you do to engage your public while making your ideas stand out against those of other organizations with similar missions?

Goals

1. To increase the adoption rate of animals at the shelter during the event.
2. To raise awareness of Auburn Animal Rescue, and the mission it supports.

Key messages

1. Opening hearts and homes to animals in need.
2. Giving animals second chances, and people new friends.

Slogan

Building a better future, one rescue at a time.

Research plan

In order to create an event that will stand out among other similar missions, I would focus on three general types of research: audience analysis, competitor research, and behavioral research. To start, using surveys and/or focus groups consisting of past adopters and community residents, I would gather data that includes things like audience preferences, motivations to adopt, and any barriers that may be keeping them from adopting. By doing this, I can ensure that the event is catered towards the needs and interests of my target audience, to make them more interested in attending. Next, I would look at other similar events done by other local organizations to see what brings in interest to both attend the event and ultimately adopt a pet. This can help the event to stand out by bringing in new, fresh ideas that haven't been done as much by others. Lastly, I would focus on behavioral research. I would look at the adoption trends during the warmer weather months. This would help me to understand what types of events and promotions are most effective during this time of year, in order to align the event with audience behavior patterns. This combination of research can ensure that this event will stand out among others, and be highly effective and data-driven.

Target Publics

Young families and couples in Auburn

Demographics (Auburn, AL, 2022)

- Total number of households in Auburn, AL: 31,076
 - 55% are married couples
- Median age: 24.7
- Gender: 51% female, 49% male
- Median household income: \$54,839
- Race and ethnicity: 68% White, 18% Black, 8% Asian, 4% Hispanic, 2% Mixed race

Psychographics

- Family values
- Active, outdoor lifestyles
- Socially and Community Engaged

Auburn University Students

Demographics (Auburn University, 2022)

- Total number of enrolled students: 31, 764
 - 83.4% full-time students
- Median age: 20
- Gender: 49.8% male, 50.2% female
- Housing: 17% live in university-owned housing, 83% live off-campus
- Race and ethnicity: 78.7% White, 4.91% Black, 4% Hispanic or Latino, 2.82% Asian, 2.75% Mixed race, 0.246% Native American

Psychographics

- Socially connected
- Seek convenience
- Community-engaged
- Experience-oriented

Objectives

Informational/awareness:

- Increase overall community awareness of the mission of Auburn Animal Rescue and the increasing income of puppies during warmer weather months by at least 30% among residents of Auburn during the next three months. I would measure it by sending out a survey to the public both before and after the event, making sure the public is informed and aware of the situation.
- Make certain that event attendees have received information and understand the \$40 discount for the spay/neuter surgery on the event day. I would measure this by doing an exit survey and/or feedback forms that would be distributed throughout the event. This will allow us to track the effectiveness of the distribution of information at the event, and how impactful it is to all of the potential adopters.

Attitude:

- Shift the attitude toward adopting shelter animals to a more positive one among at least 60% of attendees of the event. This would be measured by post-event surveys, as well as social media analysis. This objective serves to increase positive attitudes and highlight the importance of adoption.
- Decrease the amount of people who are Auburn residents who have a negative perception of the price and complication of adoption by at least 40% during the event. This would also be measured by a survey sent out both before and after the event. This focuses on decreasing concerns and misconceptions about the entire adoption process, making the public more confident and encouraging them to adopt.

Behavior:

- Increase adoptions of animals from Auburn Animal Rescue by at least 25% within two months post-event. This would be done by having an on-site adoption at the event and offering certain incentives such as the \$40 discount on spayed/neutered puppies.
- Produce at least 150 social media shares using the hashtag “#AdoptinAuburn”. We would have many photo opportunities set up around the event, encouraging attendees to take photos and post them using the hashtag. Social media monitoring would be used to track the use of the hashtag.

Strategy #1

For this project, the Social Exchange Theory can aid this event in boosting adoptions by highlighting the rewards and benefits that come from adopting an animal, while also reducing perceived costs. This theory encourages people to make informed decisions based on things that will maximize the benefits and minimize the cost. We could use this theory by promoting the discounted adoption fee, while also using testimonies from previous adopters, highlighting the benefits of adopting, and showing how their lives improved after adopting. This shows how adoption is both rewarding and cost-efficient.

Tactics for Strategy #1

- **Adopter Spotlights**
 - This would be implemented by showcasing a different adopter on social media weekly, in the weeks leading up to the event. These spotlights would feature a picture of the adopter and their pet, as well as a statement from them, highlighting the benefits that they have received since adopting. This could help potential adopters view the exchange of positive benefits that both the animal and the owner have.
- **Adoption Package**

- In addition to the spay and neuter discount, Auburn Animal Rescue could also include a small care package to be sent home with each adopter. This package could include treats, toys, and a discount voucher to a local pet store, or even to the local vet. This makes the adoption process feel more rewarding, with audience members being able to see the physical benefits they receive after adopting.
- **Event Raffle**
 - At the event, all adopters could be placed into a raffle to win different prizes. These could be local groomer discounts, pet store discounts, or discounted pet products. By adding this extra incentive, it increases audience interest and encourages them to adopt. This tactic could involve working with local stores to sponsor some of the rewards, giving them visibility as well as encouraging audience members to engage.

Strategy #2

Another theory that can boost the adoption of animals is the Agenda-setting Theory. This can encourage individuals to adopt by reshaping what the audience sees as important. This theory proposes that by targeting media attention on specific things, the public's perception of what matters most can be influenced. We could do this by focusing the messaging of the event around the urgency and benefits of adoption. By highlighting these needs and benefits, it can be ensured that the audience keeps adoption and our event on their mind.

Tactics for Strategy #2

- **Animal of the Week Media Feature**
 - This tactic involves introducing a new animal that is waiting to be adopted each week leading up to the event on social media and possibly local newspapers. This would include a picture of the animal, their background, and how long they have been at the rescue. This ensures that the need for adoption is visible over multiple platforms.
- **Adoption Awareness Day Business Partnership**
 - This would include partnering with local small businesses to delegate a specific Adoption Awareness day. A specific example of this would be partnering with a local coffee shop to create a drink that is named after an animal in the shelter. There would also be an advertisement of this drink with the animal's picture on it, encouraging audience members to support the rescue, and increasing visibility for both the coffee shop and the rescue.
- **Awareness Posters and Flyers around Auburn's campus**
 - This tactic involves placing posters and flyers that use pictures of rescue animals, adoption statistics, and testimonials from adopters around campus, specifically in high-traffic areas. This would position adoption as a priority for animal lovers and

students who see the poster. Implementing this would involve graphic design, printing, and ensuring we have permission to post them around campus. This is sure to make adoption a common topic among students.

Evaluation

Informational/Awareness:

Send out pre and post-event surveys to the Auburn/Opelika community to measure awareness of the event and of the influx of animals during season changes. Also distributing exit surveys at the event to make sure attendees were aware of the discount for a spay/neuter surgery on adopted animals. These methods give us the ability to track both the reach and impact of the event on adoption knowledge/awareness.

Survey Question:

Before attending this event, how aware were you of Auburn Animal Rescue's mission and the seasonal influx of animals needing adoption?

Attitude:

Conduct post-event interviews with event attendees to assess changes in their views and thoughts on shelter adoption, being sure to center the questions on things like ease and cost. Also, monitor social media engagement to measure positive outlooks on adoption. In-depth interviews with residents of the community both before and after the event to aid in tracking shifts in perceptions of costs of adoption and the complexity of the process.

Interview Question:

In what ways did your perception of adopting an animal from the shelter change after the event today? Did anything about the process surprise you?

Behavior:

Track the number of adoptions that happen during the event, and aim for a 25% increase in adoptions by two months after the event. Adoption records will be monitored and reviewed to judge the event's impact. Also, monitoring the use of hashtags like "#adoptinAuburn" across social media accounts by analyzing the volume of activity related to the event.