

Media Relations Plan



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Coco's Heart Dog Rescue's Situational Analysis

Before diving into press releases and local news interviews, we need to have an understanding of the company we are building a media plan for. In the situational analysis we will discuss CHDR's background and also some challenges the company may face in various situations.

Background:

Founded in May 2010, Coco's Heart Dog Rescue (CHDR) is a foster-based, volunteer-driven, non-profit rescue located in the Twin Cities area. The organization welcomes dogs from all situations, and focuses on their care, as well as finding permanent homes for every dog that comes through. Since it founding, CHDR has found homes for over 3000 animals and accepts donations through its supporter, Angel's Pet World, located in Hudson, WI. The rescue hosts multiple events a month to encourage possible adopters to meet with dogs and find a match that leads to a forever home for the dog.

Adoption, Fees, and Costs:

There are five steps when wishing to adopt from Coco's. Researching pet ownership to ensure that the decision to adopt a dog is the right one, is the most important step in the adoption process. Step two involves filling out an application telling the organization about yourself so they can determine which pet would make a good match with you. In the next step, the application is reviewed with complete background checks and calls made to veterinary and personal references. If your application is accepted, then step four is a home visit and meet & greet to ensure that your home environment and dog will be a good fit. Assuming everything goes well during the 3-5 day process, the day of adoption is picked for you to take your dog to his forever home.

When wishing to adopt a dog from CHDR, an adoption fee is required once all the adoption steps are passed. This fee is the only source of funding for CHDR other than donations and fundraisers, and goes to providing care for sick and injured dogs, as well as boarding, insurance, supplies, gas, etc. expenses. This fee also goes to covering the cost of spaying/neutering, dental cleanings, vaccinations, heartworm tests, deworming and fecal, and micro chipping provided to dogs when they enter CHDR.

Volunteers, Adoption Rate:

Much of the success that CHDR sees is because of volunteers. Volunteer positions are available for both hands-on work and behind the scenes during fundraisers. To become a volunteer, an application must be filled out and turned in to be reviewed by CHDR. In the first three months of 2016, CHDR had 930 applications come in. After processing all the applications in two days, less than 50% of applicants responded back, and out of the remaining applicants, 20% replied saying they already adopted from somewhere else. Only 30% of the total applicants adopted from CHDR despite best efforts to process applications and create matches in a timely manner.

Coco's Heart Dog Rescue's Target Audience

Selecting the correct target audience will assure that the media knows how to write for who we want to receive our company's messages. When there is an audience in mind when writing for the public, the people who will help us complete our goal will more easily reached.

Age: Primarily targeted age is 18 years and up. A basic requirement is that they are well enough to take care of themselves along with a companion.

Families: Preferably stable families who do not tend to move a lot and are willing to settle down. The reasoning behind that is because most of these dogs have moved around most of their life, and its time for them to have a stable home that they can familiarize themselves with. Those with children are a great bonus for some dogs, these dogs can have play mates and get the love they truly deserve.

Volunteers: Anyone with a kind heart who is willing to help take care of these dogs in the meantime, until they find their perfect family. This would include at fostering the dogs, assisting with adoption events, helping with fundraising, etc.

Foster Families: Focused on those who aren't ready to settle and have a permanent dog, this would be great to start with a foster dog. This is targeted to those who are willing to help out these dogs and give them a temporary loving home.

Community Leaders: Those who are willing to help get the word around the community about adopting a dog from our organization.

Locations: Targeted audience would be located within the eastern half of the Twin Cities, Hudson, River Falls, Woodbury, and Stillwater.

Media Relation Goals and Objectives

When developing a media relations plan for a company it is important to have an overarching goal to strive for. This goal should be congruent with the company's business goals. This goal will be developed through a growing relationship with local media outlets. Our company, Coco's Heart Dog Rescue (CHDR) has a clear goal of getting dogs adopted. Our goal for Coco's Heart Dog Rescue that will be completed through cooperation with the media is to:

Increase media presence in order to increase dog adoptions and lessen average amount of time spent with foster families.

To make sure that CHDR accomplishes this goal, they will need specific and measurable objectives. These objectives include:

1. Build lasting relationships with eight local media sources throughout the course of 2017.
2. Increase completed dog adoptions to 300 per month.
3. Set average time that dogs spend at foster family's homes to 3 months.

Strategies and Tactics

For each of our three objectives, we will need strategies to involve the media in helping us complete our goal. Each objective will have its strategy or set of strategies. Furthermore, each strategy will then have an executable tactic.

Our first objective is to build relationships with the local (Hudson, Woodbury, etc.) media. This objective will take place continuously throughout the next year (2017.) This objective has one overall strategy.

Our only strategy in building relationships with the media is to reach out to them. We want the media (newspapers, radio, TV, blogs, online community) to know exactly who Coco's Heart Dog Rescue is and what our mission is. We will be using these tactics to build and maintain our media relationships:

1. Send media advisories to newspapers and radio about our standard adoption events.

2. Send media advisories to TV and newspaper for larger donation/adoption events.
3. Send in feature articles about the benefits of rescuing dogs to bigger newspapers.
4. Send in press release about events into local TV/radio/newspapers.
5. Connect with local personalities on Twitter and Facebook and invite them to events.
6. Find and reach out to bloggers who have a Minneapolis/St. Paul dog-loving readership and tell them about CHDR.

Our second objective is to increase completed dog adoptions to 300 adoptions per month. This objective will have two separate strategies:

Our first strategy to increase adoptions, we need to get more potential adopters to our adoption events. We host all of our adoption events on a volunteer basis and it is one of the few ways the community members can meet our adoptable dogs. The more patrons we have attending events the bigger the possibility of adoption becomes. These executable tasks utilize our growing media relations and will assure this strategy helps us complete our increasing adoptions objective. The tasks are as follows:

1. Send press releases to local newspapers before big adoption events.
2. Boost events on Facebook so more than just people who like to page will see the adoption events.
3. Set up a weekly adoptable dog article in the Hudson and Woodbury newspapers. Tell an emotional story about why this particular dog should be adopted.
4. Feature the same weekly adoptable dog in a few Facebook posts per week. Create secondary Facebook page just for the weekly dogs.

The second strategy we will use to increase the completed dog adoptions is to educate the public about the process of rescuing dogs and also provide information about the

dogs' medical and behavioral concerns. The media based tasks for this strategy include:

1. Write and send in feature articles to newspapers and blogs about benefits of rescuing, why there are fees with rescuing, and how to help newly rescued dogs adjust to new homes.
2. Participate in interviews with reporters at events that had a media advisory sent out for them.

Our third and final objective is to lessen the amount of time the rescued dogs spend in the care of CHDR's fostering volunteers. CHDR's volunteers love caring for these amazing dogs, however, the dogs all need a forever home to go to. By making sure the dogs spend three months or less in foster care, the overall goal of the company will be completed. To lessen foster time by utilizing the media, please refer to these three strategies.

The first strategy allowing dogs to spend less time being fostered is to simply get them adopted more frequently. Luckily, this strategy coincides with our second objective. Here's a recap of the tactics used to get dogs adopted:

1. Send press releases to local newspapers before big adoption events.
2. Boost events on Facebook so more than just people who like to page will see the adoption events.
3. Set up a weekly adoptable dog article in the Hudson and Woodbury newspapers. Tell an emotional story about why this particular dog should be adopted.
4. Feature the same weekly adoptable dog in a few Facebook posts per week. Create secondary Facebook page just for the weekly dogs.
5. Write and send in feature articles to newspapers and blogs about benefits of rescuing, why there are fees with rescuing, and how to help newly rescued dogs adjust to new homes.
6. Participate in interviews with reporters at events that had a media advisory sent out for them.

The second strategy to set the time in foster care to only three months is to create more partnerships with local business. These partnerships will allow us to host adoption events in their space. The tactics to get these partnerships are as follows:

1. Connect with local businesses and tell them the story of Coco's Heart.
2. Pick pet friendly areas in more communities closer to where foster families live to encourage more adoptable dogs to attend events.

The third strategy in managing time spent in foster care is to increase the amount of communication done by the volunteer foster families. By increasing the communications from the families, potential adopters will learn more about the dogs they are interested in and will, in turn, get dogs adopted quicker lessening their time at the fosters. The communication tactics for the volunteers are as follows:

1. Teach foster families about social media posting featuring their fostered dog.
2. Encourage foster families to send in stories about their fostered dogs to be reviewed by CHDR to be sent to the media.

Media Story Angles and Messages

When there are a set of values and messages a company stands for, these values can be translated into media stories. Here are the messages that CHDR would like its target audience to receive when they read or see media coverage of the rescue.

Mission Statement:

Coco's Heart Dog Rescue is a primarily volunteer-driven organization that welcomes dogs to rescue from unfortunate situations and houses them in volunteer foster homes while preparing them for adoption placement. We focus on evaluating each dog's needs, provide high quality veterinary care, and work towards finding them a life long match with an adoption placement. We strive to educate our community on the importance of rescue, our specific rescue efforts, responsible pet ownership, and the difference each person can make on the lives of dogs in need.

Story Angle

Coco's Heart Dog Rescue is an effort grounded in love, dedication, and determination, which is how the organization's image should be presented to the media and public. The dream of establishing this rescue started back in 2000 when a very special dog,

Coco, passed away unexpectedly at age 5. The loss inspired Coco's owner, Ashley, to save other canine friends in his name. Ashley and Coco had been the best of friends and it is in his name that this endeavor lives on. In late 2009, the dream of starting a rescue became a reality.

CHDR has rescued over one thousand dogs in 2016, many from unfortunate situations and terrible conditions. The wonderful workforce at Coco's uses love and dedication when helping the dogs that come through. Dogs that have been abused, mistreated, or abandoned are taken in, given the care and affection they deserve, and are put with temporary fosters while the rescue searches for their forever home. Tales of happy puppies with families who take great care of them are the common success stories CHDR builds and prospers on.

The rescue does not discriminate against any breed or disability a dog might have, and works even harder to find acceptance for any dog treated with intolerance. CHDR takes the time to get to know the dogs in their care and learn the individual personalities and habits the dogs have, or will most likely develop. Dogs in the rescue range from tiny pups to super seniors, all looking for homes. Some of these dogs are found on the street, others are given up by previous owners, yet every dog keeps an enthusiasm for life and love, hoping to find a permanent family.

By being so committed to this cause, CHDR has bettered the lives of thousands of dogs, and the community as well. The countless rescues have strengthened the relationship between animal lovers and the community's image, making the project even more well-loved and reputable by all who hear of it. The rescue has made adoptions from all over the country despite being stationed only in the Twin Cities area. This is because of the wonderful reputation CHDR has grown as a rescue that truly cares for their dogs and works to make not only the lives of animals better, but the community better as well.

Coco's Heart Dog Rescue is a project that continues to affect and improve the lives of rescued pups by helping them heal emotionally, mentally, and physically. Finding dogs permanent homes is a heartfelt and dedicated effort that CHDR performs to the very best of its abilities through the help of its faculty and many volunteers.

Media List

BROADCAST					
OUTLET	CONTACT	PHONE	E-MAIL/OTHER	ADDRESS	WEB ADDRESS
Kare 11 News	Stacy Lamen	(763) 797-7215	news@kare11.com	8811 Olson Memorial Hwy. Minneapolis, MN 55427	http://www.kare11.com/
5 Eyewitness News	Anne Wittenborg	612-588-6397	5EyewitnessNews@KSTP.com	3415 University Ave. Saint Paul, 55114	http://kstp.com/
Fox 9 News	Jason Sirek	952-946-5767	fox9news@foxtv.com	11358 Viking Drive Eden Prairie, MN 55344	http://www.fox9.com/

PRINT					
OUTLET	CONTACT	PHONE	E-MAIL/OTHER	ADDRESS	WEB ADDRESS
Hudson Star	Steve Engelhart	(715) 426-1039		2815 Prairie Drive / P.O. Box 25 River Falls, Wisconsin 54022	http://www.hudsonstarobserver.com/
Star Tribune	Steve Yaeger	612-673-4256	steve.yaeger@startribune.com	650 3rd Ave. South, Suite 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488	http://www.startribune.com/
River Falls Journal	Phil Pfuehler	(715) 426-1050	Pfuehler_Phil@RiverFallsJournal.com	2815 Prairie Drive / P.O. Box 25 River Falls, Wisconsin 54022	http://www.riverfallsjournal.com/

RADIO					
OUTLET	CONTACT	PHONE	E-MAIL/OTHER	ADDRESS	WEB ADDRESS
WCCO 830	Sam Heilds	1-800-444-9226	newstips@wccoradio.com	625 2nd Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55402	http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/station/830-wcco/
WRFW 88.7	Matthew Clark	715-425-3886	matthew.clark@my.wrfw.edu	306 North Hall 410 South Third Street River Falls, WI 54022	http://www.wrfw887.com/

Media Relations Evaluation Strategy

To determine if media relations are improved through this campaign, there will be a number of steps deployed to evaluate the relationship. The objectives of the campaign (i.e. dog adoption rates and time spent in foster care) will be seen in the adoption rates for subsequent months.

To determine to success of the media relations, however, there will need to be a count on the number of newspaper articles mentioning the rescue. The strength of the media relation will be judged in part on how well they portray CHDR and the target audience they are reaching.

The more mentions from the outlets in the media list will mean a stronger relation with the media. If any press releases are sent to the media, the amount of the original press release published will be a way to show the relationship with the media.

CHDR will set up Google Alerts to see when people view their website and when they are mentioned in any online or social media post, further tracking the relations with the media. Using the keywords and terms: Coco's Heart Dog Rescue, dog rescue Hudson, dog rescue Woodbury, dog rescue River Falls, Coco's Heart, dog adoption Hudson, doggie 5K Lake Elmo, Angel's Pet World, Pet Evolution.

The volunteers can be asked when they arrive how they were notified about CHDR. This will prove that the message from the media is reaching the intended audience, and there can be investments into the areas that bring the most volunteers, and the more volunteers will be proof of the frequent and strong relations with the media.