Social Marketing for a Cause

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Social Marketing for A Cause

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**Executive Summary**

**Current Position**

The Laramie Animal Shelter is run by the local police department and its main objective is to improve the co-existence of animals and humans alike. The shelter provides the highest quality care for the displaced animals of our community and makes every effort to secure compassionate, responsible, permanent homes for the adoptable animals that are in their care.\(^1\)

Currently, the shelter offers enrichment programs for the animals, has a volunteer program, and cares for the animals compassionately, which is something not many consumers in the community are aware of. Animal shelters get a bad reputation for being places full of unruly/aggressive dogs, places where the animals are poorly taken care of or where animals go to die. The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness for the Laramie Animal Shelter in hopes of changing people’s negative views not only of the Laramie shelter but of shelters in general. Hopefully, this awareness will push consumers to adopt instead of shop for their next pet.

**Competitive Environment**

Purchasing a pet is a very serious decision for consumers and they often have one specific animal in mind, which makes the competition to the local shelter vast. Competition includes; pet stores, rescues in the region (e.g. Black Dog Rescue), families breeding and selling animals, and other shelters in the region (e.g. Cheyenne). The Laramie Animal Shelter is not looking to directly compete with these other alternatives because all animals need homes. However, it is a nation wide goal to stop consumers from purchasing from pet stores and breeders to help the vast amount of animals that already do not have homes. By raising awareness for the Laramie Animal Shelter more consumers will be compelled to check the Laramie shelter before traveling around the region to find their next pet. The shelter currently does a great job of keeping their website up to date with the animals that are currently up for adoption, but there are many more options that can potentially be implemented in order to increase traffic and awareness to the shelter.
Note: (See Figure 1. in the Appendix for a visual representation of recommendations)

**Short-Term Recommendations (< 3 months):** Revamp Brand Image

1. Redesign Website
2. Allow a donation option on the website
3. Increase presence on social media platforms to connect with Laramie Community

**Medium-Term Recommended Changes (3 months-1 year):** Get the Word Out

1. Create flyers/postage to put up around community
2. Increase current advertising efforts in the area (radio, TV, etc.)
3. Remain active on social media

**Long-Term Recommendations (> 12 months):** Aid Consumer Perception’s

1. Add color to walls in shelter to increase positive feelings with the shelter
2. Create events around town (e.g., doggie destress during finals on campus)
3. Showcase Volunteer Program and all they do for the animals through advertising and social media

**Recommendations**

**Client Interactions**

My initial client interaction directly related to this marketing campaign was done over email on October 13, 2016 with Rene Sollar’s, the volunteer coordinator at the Laramie Animal Shelter. However, it should be known that further interactions took place in person throughout the fall semester. During my interaction with Rene Sollars, I discovered the real issues that the shelter faces when it comes to marketing are budget and time involvement. I asked Rene if the shelter had a marketing budget and what their current marketing/advertising efforts consisted of. Rene told me that they have no marketing budget, and therefore take advantage of free opportunities around the community, such as, pet features in the Laramie Boomerang, City of Laramie closed circuit television, local radio options and Facebook. I was also curious if the shelter would be interested in getting more involved on social media or if they wished to keep
Facebook as their main social media outlet. Rene is primarily in charge of the website and the Facebook page but also supervises the volunteer program. Time involvement is huge for the shelter, Rene stated that they do not have the time to keep up on social media pages, making this something that would most likely have to be volunteer based and then approved by staff before posted.

This client interaction also consisted of general questions about the shelter and the way that it is ran. I asked questions targeted at getting factual information about the shelter to compare with consumer’s perceptions of the shelter that I later found through my market research. First and foremost, I asked how often the shelter has to euthanize dogs, to which Rene replied, “not very often. Usually for dogs it’s due to aggression or other behavioral issues or maybe due to an untreatable health condition.” This led to discussing how long animals are kept at the shelter before euthanizing is considered. At the Laramie Animal Shelter as long as a dog is healthy both mentally and physically, is friendly and adoptable then they are allowed to stay for as long as it takes to find them a home. Occasionally, an animal that has been at the shelter for a long period of time may be relocated to another location such as the Black Dog Animal Rescue located in Cheyenne, Wyoming. According to Rene, on average a dog is only at the shelter for 7-8 days and in 2015 the Laramie Animal Shelter housed 585 dogs over the course of the entire year. Donations to the shelter go directly to the Laramie Animal Welfare Society and then some of those funds are dispersed to the shelter based off of how much the Welfare Society gets. Due to the fact that the shelter is operated by the City of Laramie their budget is funded by the city government. Rene mentioned that they do use some donations but are operating on a set budget provided by the city.

**Personal Experience**

I have been a volunteer at the Laramie Animal Shelter since Fall of 2014. My title being dog walker, which includes anything ranging from walking a dog to filling kongs with peanut butter for the dogs to enjoy throughout the day. Through my experience at the shelter I have noticed many false pretenses that consumers have towards animal shelters thus directly impacting their willingness to adopt. I have often heard statements like, “I want a puppy,” “I do not want a mutt,” “shelters are full of pit bulls.” My experience at the shelter has shown me that shelters are not made up entirely of mutts, or pit bulls but also puppies and sometimes even
purebreds. A shelter is not completely made up of unwanted animals that have behavioral issues, which is a common perception I saw in my market research when participants were asked what sorts of dogs they thought frequented shelters. Often times the animals in the shelter are there because they were not being properly cared for by their owners, their owners moved away and could not take them, or they are simply lost. I have seen pure bred dogs at the Laramie Animal Shelter such as Golden Retriever’s, German Shepherd’s, Newfoundland’s, and Siberian Husky’s. The shelter often has puppies as well; it is simply something that consumers have to look out for as they go fairly quickly due to high demand. Quite recently the shelter had two Rhodesian Ridgeback puppies, which can range anywhere from $1500-$3000 in price.\textsuperscript{2} There was a line out the door to adopt these two puppies. In order for an animal to get adopted at the shelter owners must first go through an adoption process. (See Figure 3. in the Appendix to see an adoption form) The first customer to be approved for adoption is who receives the animal, not the first person that wanted the animal. Therefore, it is important for consumers to go through this process in a timely manner in order for them to purchase the dog they wish before someone else does, much like the case with the Rhodesian Ridgeback puppies.

The basis of this project comes from my insights that I have procured through my work at the shelter. I have realized holes in the marketing for the animal shelter and created possible remedies for current marketing issues.

**Market Research Summary**

*Method.* Ninety adults (26\% male, M\textsubscript{age}=26.88) participated in my survey. Participants were asked questions based on basic dog information, and their perceptions/knowledge of animal shelters and rescues. Participants were also shown two pictures of dogs and asked several questions based off the two photos. Lastly, basic demographic questions were asked.

**Dog Information**

1. Are you a dog person? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
2. Do you own a dog? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
3. If yes, where did you get your dog? (6-point scale, options: pet store, animal rescue, animal shelter, friend/family, other, do not own a dog)
4. Have you ever heard of a puppy mill before? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
5. How much are you willing to spend for a dog? (6-point scale, endpoints: less than $100/anything for the right dog)

Animal Shelter Questions
1. Have you ever been to your town/cities local animal shelter? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
2. What is your overall outlook on animal shelters? (5-point scale, endpoints: extremely positive/extremely negative)
3. Do you think animals at shelters are poorly taken care of? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
6. Give a short description of what a shelter is like in your eyes (open ended)
7. What types of dogs do you think frequent shelters? (open ended)
8. Would you ever adopt a dog from a shelter? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
9. How often do you think dogs are euthanized at shelters? (5-point scale, endpoints: daily/a couple times a year)
10. Did you know most shelters give animals their shots and neuter them before adoption? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)

Rescue Questions
1. Have you ever visited an animal rescue? (2-point scale, endpoints: yes/no)
2. What is your outlook on animal rescues? (open ended)

Dog Photo Questions
Note: See Figure 8, for the photo shown in the survey
1. Based off of the above picture, which dog would you assume is from an animal shelter? (4-point scale, options: dog on the left, dog on the right, both, neither)
2. Do either or both of these dogs look happy? (4-point scale, options: both look happy, the one on the left looks happy, the one on the right looks happy, neither look happy)

Lastly, demographic questions assessed the participant’s age, gender, completed education level and marital status.
Results. After conducting a linear regression model I found that the more often that the participants in the survey visited rescues the more often they thought that animals at shelters got euthanized ($t \ (63) = 2.14, \ p = .063$). Additionally, in the linear regression model I discovered that there was no significant influence of owning a dog, being a dog person, or the demographics of age, gender, education level, and marital status to how often participants believed dogs got euthanized. I discovered that participants that had visited shelters in the past had a more positive outlook on shelters in general ($t \ (63) = 2.01, \ p = .049$). Additionally, younger participants were willing to spend more to purchase a dog ($r = -.31, \ p = .008$) over older participants. However, it is important to note that this could be due to the limitations of my sample only having 6 participants over the age of 38. Additionally, females were more likely to know that shelters neuter/spay animals before adoption ($r = -.23, \ p = .049$). Lastly, an interesting finding was that owning a dog has no significant impact on the positive or negative outlook of animal shelters.

Discussion. The most important finding in the results is that participants that had visited shelters in the past had a more positive outlook on shelters in general. This is a perfect indication for the Laramie Animal Shelter that the more traffic they get coming through the shelter the more likely it is that consumers will have a more positive outlook on animal shelters in general. This is a huge part of raising awareness for the Laramie Animal Shelter in order to increase consumer’s positive perceptions of shelters. It is also important to note that owning a dog had no impact on participant’s outlooks of shelters. Therefore, targeting everyone, even consumers that do not own a dog, will be important going forward. It is also important to note that I found that participants with a higher education level had a better outlook on shelters, therefore it may be beneficial for the shelter to target markets outside of the University of Wyoming campus. There was also a significance between the amount that participants were willing to spend on an animal and where they got their animal. (See Figure 2. in the Appendix for a graph of this data). This would be important for the shelter to note because most participants would spend more when they got their dog from the other category, which were mostly breeders. (See Figure 7. in the Appendix for a chart of where participants got their dog). It is a common misconception that animal shelters do not house many purebred dogs, therefore this is another opportunity for the shelter to raise awareness about the dogs that frequent the shelter.
Short-Term Recommendations (<3 months)

Redesign Website

My first short-term recommendation for the Laramie Animal Shelter is the redesign of their current website. The website is functional but it lacks a pleasing aesthetic. The current website design seems to be dated and basic. Creating a pleasant aesthetic is extremely important for an environment that consumers may already have negative feelings towards. Currently, all of the information on the webpage is placed onto one main home page, which could all be organized and moved to separate pages to increase user friendliness. (See Figure 3. in the Appendix for a website comparison between the Laramie shelter with a Denver shelter). The shelter’s logo should also be more present on the webpage creating an association with the shelter and their current logo. It would also be beneficial for the shelter to have links to their social media accounts directly on their webpage for further digital integration. Currently, this would only include Facebook, further social media presence will be discussed later. Overall, a completely modernized, more organized website would benefit the perception consumers have with the shelter making their experience a more positive one. This task could take anywhere from a few weeks to a month to complete and will happen concurrently with the other short-term recommendations. The shelter does not have a budget for redesign which is why this is something that would most likely need to be done on a volunteer basis. A volunteer in the program could have experience in web design making this recommendation come at virtually no cost other than time involvement (See Table 2. for further cost estimates).

Allow a Donation Option On the Website

In the short-term I also recommend that there be a donation link directly set up through the website, which will be included in the redesign of the website. Currently, the shelter is funded by the city government, and several donations that come directly from the Animal Welfare Society. However, there are many consumers that would love to donate funds directly to the shelter and are not supplied with a way to do so. By adding a donation link to their website the shelter could potentially increase their funding to do more events, activities, and get more supplies for the animals. Other shelters around the area offer similar links on their webpages to
increase donations. For example, the Cheyenne Animal Shelter has a large blue button on their home page which is a link to donate to the shelter. By increasing donations, the shelter will have more of a budget for marketing objectives.

**Increase Presence on Social Media Platforms to Connect with Laramie Community**

My last short-term recommendation for the shelter is to increase their presence on social media in order to reach a broader customer base throughout the Laramie community. Currently, the shelter is only active on Facebook which is still a site that they could increase their presence on even more. As of right now, the Facebook page has little to no new information about the shelter and activities that are currently underway. The Facebook page has 2,482 likes while only 67 people have stated that they have visited the shelter, which is a number that I hope will increase through the additional presence on other social media sites, linking back to the Facebook page. Other social media sites that I would recommend the shelter becomes more active on are Instagram and Snapchat which are both great places to raise awareness about the animals that are coming to the shelter, events coming up, and information on the shelter in general. As a volunteer I am constantly posting videos of dogs on my Snapchat story, to which many people then direct questions to me about. I think getting on snapchat and allowing the volunteers to post directly to the Snapchat story would be a beneficial way to get the community involved, while also raising awareness for the dogs being housed at the shelter. By getting volunteers involved this recommendation can be done with little to no time involvement from shelter staff, which was a huge concern for the shelter when it came to marketing tactics. A huge part of the Laramie community is made up of a younger demographic due to the presence of the University of Wyoming, which is why getting involved on Instagram and Snapchat is the perfect place to target this younger millennial demographic that are very active on these two sites. This recommendation will happen concurrently with the other short-term recommendations.

**Medium-Term Recommendations (3 months-1 year)**

**Create Flyers/Postage to put Up Around Community**

The Laramie Animal Shelter is located at LaBonte Park in Laramie, Wyoming which is in a hidden location that many people in the community do not know about right away. For
example, I grew up in the Laramie community and for a majority of my life had no idea where the shelter was located. This is why it is important for the shelter to create more signage around town or simply around LaBonte park. This may include flyers, posters, or permanent signage outside the shelter that increase awareness of the shelters existence and location. I would recommend flyers be placed in highly trafficked areas around the community (e.g., on campus, grocery stores, downtown). These flyers would be advertising efforts to raise awareness for the shelter and increase the traffic that is coming through the shelter (See Figures 5 and 6 in the Appendix for examples of possible flyers). The overall idea is to create a flyer that creates a positive feeling with consumers by showing happy animals that have come directly from the shelter. These flyers will also be in place to raise awareness of the location of the shelter. The same examples of flyers in the Appendix could be blown up to poster size and hung in locations that businesses approve of around town (See Table 2 for cost estimates). As the implementation of this recommendation may require approval of shelter staff, creation, and design I estimate these changes to take 4-6 months to enact.

**Increase Current Advertising Efforts in the Area**

In order to increase awareness even more than already being implemented I recommend that the Laramie Animal Shelter increase its local advertising efforts. Currently, marketing efforts are limited to those that are free around the community. I believe there are more opportunities for free advertising. It will be very important to remain constant in the Laramie Boomerang, on local television, and local radio channels. Often times there are options for non-profits to get free advertising, or the chance to get involved with local businesses that are willing to mention the shelter for little to no cost at all. It is vital to shift the brand positioning of the shelter to more demographics and a larger customer base. By becoming more active with local radio and television stations the amount of consumers that hear about the shelter will increase, thus increasing traffic. Traffic to the shelter is a major part of changing consumer’s negative perceptions of animal shelters to positive ones, therefore traffic is vital. The full implementation of this recommendation will occur over time, and concurrently with the other medium-term recommendations, thus I estimate it taking 5-6 months to complete, with the creation, and approval of advertisements. (See Table 2 for cost estimates of implementation).
Remain Active on Social Media

After the initial creation of the social media sites it will be important to upkeep the sites. Social media is only useful if it is being kept up on. In my interaction with Rene Sollars, she mentioned that the main reason the shelter is not using other social media outlets other than Facebook is because they do not have the time for upkeep. As mentioned previously it would be beneficial to get the volunteer program involved in the upkeep of social media presence. If the shelter would like to have the ultimate control over the sites they could require volunteers to show the volunteer supervisor, Rene Sollars, the posts before they upload them to the site. In order for full media integration it will also be of utmost importance to have links for each social media page present on the others. The flyers/signage that are created will also have icons for Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat to let consumers know that the shelter is active on those sites, so that they can then go follow and like those pages.

**Long-Term Recommendations (> 12 Months)**

Add Color to Walls in Shelter to Increase Positive Feelings with the Shelter

My long-term recommendations stray away from advertising/social media in order to enhance consumer’s positive feelings with the Laramie Animal Shelter in general. Through my market research I discovered that many participants described shelters as grey, cement, cold places. The cement does have a purpose, as it is an easy surface to clean up messes from animals, but it portrays a prison like feel, which aids in people’s negative connotations with animal shelters and the animals that frequent them. In order to increase the positive aesthetic of the shelter I recommend adding several colorful accent walls throughout the shelter, in the hallways, and the main lobby. Adding brighter colors to the walls will take away from the all grey, cement feel that consumers are associating with shelters. The implementation of these accent walls would take a very small amount of paint, estimated around 2 gallons which can be purchased at very low costs at Walmart (See Table 2. in the Appendix for cost estimates). This is another activity that I do not foresee being a problem in getting volunteers involved with helping out, thus taking away from the time involvement from staff. The purpose of this long-term recommendation would be to make the shelter a warmer and more inviting place, thus creating an environment that consumers want to spend time in, not only in searching for their forever pet,
but possibly to volunteer at in the future. The implementation of this step would occur over time and would be estimated to take anywhere from 5-6 months for full implementation.

**Create Events Around Town**

There are many opportunities for the shelter to get involved around the community in order to further create awareness. In the long-term it would be extremely beneficial for the animal shelter to involve themselves in events around Laramie and potentially create their own events. Some examples of this could be doggy destress sessions on campus, dog walk competitions, or simply setting up a booth in the Union at the University of Wyoming. Currently, the University of Wyoming offers doggy destress sessions to students during dead week and finals week, these sessions are a time for students to interact with dogs, usually from the Black Dog Rescue out of Cheyenne, Wyoming. This is a perfect opportunity for the shelter to possibly partner with the Black Dog Rescue in these events or set up similar events throughout the semester on their own. By taking some of the shelters animals directly to the consumer, the shelter would be bypassing some of the challenges they face with awareness of their location. These types of events are also the perfect opportunity to showcase any flyers/signage to further raise awareness for the local shelter and its location. Another event idea would be dog walking competitions around LaBonte park. Consumers can sign up, donate, and have a competition to see who can make three laps around the park first with their own animal. Although this event would not directly involve the dogs at the shelter, if it was hosted by the shelter and took place at LaBonte Park it would further raise awareness for the location of the shelter. My last suggestion for getting involved would be to set up an informational booth in the student union on campus during busy times of the year, for example the first couple weeks of classes. By doing this, incoming students that may never have visited Laramie before will be aware of the shelter, it’s locations and what they have to offer. The integration of this step would take a sufficient amount of time ranging anywhere from 6 moths to a year and would require more time involvement from staff than previous recommendations.

**Showcase Volunteer Program and All They Do for the Animals**

My last suggestion in the long-term would be to showcase the volunteer program, not only to recognize those that are working hard for the shelter but to show the public that there are
many people in the community dedicated to the well-being of the animals at the shelter. In the past, the shelter has run short articles in the Boomerang recognizing the volunteers and shortly outlining their positions. Currently, there are three different positions for volunteers, dog walkers, cat cuddlers, and shelter monitors. In the past, pictures have been posted of volunteers on the wall in the shelter, which I believe is something that should be continued. Not only will volunteers dedicate their time and effort more if they are being recognized but it also raises awareness for the volunteer program in general. The implementation of this step takes little to no time and could be fully implemented in a few weeks to a month.

**SWOT Analysis of Shelter**

Note: For short overview of SWOT (See Table 1. in the Appendix)

**Strengths**

The Laramie Animal Shelter is very well run and offers many desirable offerings upon adoption that make them stick out over other options of procuring a pet. Upon adoption animals will be given all of their shots, spayed/neutered, and microchipped free of charge.\(^1\) Animals also come with a free collar and tag. All of these options are something that the shelter offers in order to cut back on the amount of animals that land back in shelters all over the country. Microchipping and collar tags make it easy for owners to find their lost pets, while offering free neuters limits the overpopulation of unwanted pets that are landing in shelters. Typically, these are costs that really add up for a pet owner. The average cost of having your dog spayed/neutered can range anywhere from $45-$300 depending on the size and weight of your dog and where you are having the procedure done.\(^4\) The average cost of getting animals shots the first year ranges anywhere from $20-$150 and $10-$100 every year thereafter.\(^5\) Although much cheaper the cost of a microchip on average is around $45\(^6\) and purchasing a collar/tag can range from $20-$50.\(^7\) Not only are all of these costs cut back on when adopting but the actual adoption is very cheap. At the Laramie Animal Shelter the cost of adoption is only $35, where as the average cost of purchasing a purebred dog can range from $500-$2000.\(^7\) Overall, the pet owner that chooses to adopt from the shelter can save anywhere from $165-$2500, making cost a huge strength for the shelter. The treatment of their animals is another huge strength for the Laramie Animal Shelter. Based off of my market research I discovered that many consumers have a very poor outlook on
shelters. Some people stated these are places for dogs to go to die, do not get let out often and are poorly taken care of. The Laramie Animal Shelter prides themselves on the compassionate way they care for their animals. Every morning the dogs are given kong toys that are filled with cold wet dog food or peanut butter. This gives the dogs not only a tasty treat, but something to keep their mind on throughout the day, trying to get the food inside the kong out. This is one of the few enrichment programs that the shelter focuses on. Enrichment is a very important part of keeping the animals mentally and physically healthy, and is something that is also done in zoos.\textsuperscript{1} Enrichment is any activity that engages an animal’s curiosity, challenges an animal physically or mentally to accomplish a task, or provides a break from the monotony of kennel life.\textsuperscript{1} The shelter’s volunteer program was put into place in order to add to the enrichment of animal’s lives and provide them with gentle care. It is a common misconception that dogs at shelters do not get let out very often, however at the Laramie Animal Shelter this is not the case. Each dog is walked twice a day on average, which are the two time slots available for volunteers. Not only are there dog walkers, but dog monitors that spend time with the dogs inside their kennels, in the yard, or in the education room. Two walks a day is a lot more than a lot of pet owners are providing their animals with at home. Therefore, the enrichment/treatment of the animals and the volunteer program are huge strengths for the animal shelter.

**Weaknesses**

The shelters weaknesses mostly center around their marketing/branding efforts. The lack of funding for marketing has created a problem for consumer’s awareness of the shelter. Many people in the Laramie Community do not even know where the shelter is located, which can be due to it’s slightly hidden location near Labonte Park. Another weakness for the shelter is their workforce, which is sometimes understaffed. Other than the volunteers at the shelter there are less than ten employees, who not only run the shelter but deal with animal disturbances around town. The officers at the shelter investigate neglect and cruelty of animals, look into animal bites, and provide educational programs for the community.\textsuperscript{1} The shelter has little to no presence on social media other than their Facebook page which is a huge outlet for awareness and advertising. The last weakness for the shelter is that the number of animals that are going to need to be housed is unpredictable. This can cause over capacity, or a shelter with no dogs is going to push consumers to search other places for their next pet.
Opportunities

Due to the shelters lack of marketing they have many opportunities to expand their marketing efforts. As stated above in the recommendations section the shelter can expand their presence on social media, open up the website for donations and advertise more throughout the community. I believe that the shelter has the opportunity to do these things at little to no cost. A marketing program could be started much like the volunteer program. A select group of volunteers could be in charge of running the social media pages, and creating flyers/postage to hang up around town. Another option would be to hire more staff so that the shelter is never understaffed, which would require more funding. Lastly, the shelter could make use of more technology in order to work more efficiently. This could be done through the website, or programs used throughout the shelter to make more user friendly technology for consumers to use.

Threats

The biggest threat to the shelter is their competition, which include pet stores, breeders, rescues, other shelters, and friends/families selling animals. Often times consumers do not think they can find their dream dog at a shelter and especially can not find a puppy. The problem with “competition” in this industry is that every animal needs a home, but the ultimate goal is to cut down on the amount of animals that are being purchased from pet stores, and thus going against the efforts of reducing the amount of puppy mills. This leads to the threat of consumer perceptions of shelters which could deter them from going to or adopting from shelters. The media is a threat that adds to consumer’s perceptions, sometimes the media portrays animal shelters in a negative light which leads to less adoptions. Funding can be seen as a threat because it could be cut back, which would lead to budget cuts throughout the shelter. The economy is also a threat because in times of recession consumers are not spending as much. Although the costs of adopting a dog from the shelter are much smaller than other alternatives, taking care of an animal is not a cheap thing to do. These animals would need beds, toys, food, emergency funds, etc. which are all expenses consumers may not be willing to spend in times of recession. Lastly, capacity of the shelter is a threat because during “busy” times of the year the shelter may reach capacity and have to euthanize animals or turn others away. One busy time of the year is
Christmas when consumers are gifted animals that they may not have wanted or can not take care of. Another busy time of the year is the Fourth of July when many dogs escape from their homes during firework shows, out of fear.

**Marketing Objectives**

**Target Market**

The target market for this campaign will center around 20-40-year-olds who are married/have families and college students at the University of Wyoming. It is important in a college town to target the majority, which are college students, these are people that are starting families, and are beginning to be at points in their life that they are ready to dedicate themselves to raising a pet. The main platforms that will be used for the campaign are Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, which reach out directly to this younger demographic, because millennials are very social media centered. For the older portion of the target market social media is still a platform that they are present on, more so Facebook than the other social media options, which the shelter is already utilizing. Another huge portion of this campaign is focusing on the low cost of adopting a dog vs. purchasing a purebred dog. This is another aspect that attracts the younger demographic because they may not be at a point in their life that purchasing an expensive animal is an option. However, it is important to note in my market research that the younger a participant was the more they were willing to spend on a new dog ($r = -.31, p = .008$).

**Awareness**

The ultimate goal of the campaign is to raise awareness not only for the Laramie Animal Shelter but for the benefits of adopting vs. purchasing a pet. It is vital to increase awareness of the Laramie Animal Shelter’s location, the types of dogs that frequent the shelter and the positive way that the animals are cared for. Awareness will be achieved through the use of advertising efforts such as flyers, events, postage, etc., and becoming more present on social media.

**Increase in Adoptions from Shelters/Rescues**

Not all consumers are educated on where pet stores are getting their animals from and the life span of these animals because of the environment they grew up in. The hope is that through increased traffic to the animal shelter consumers will have the ability to be educated on the
importance of adopting from shelters vs. purchasing pets from breeders or pet stores. The population of dogs is booming and has reached a point of overpopulation which is why so many dogs are put down all across the country daily. If consumers were more educated on breeder’s/pet stores and their negative impact on society then perhaps more consumers would be adopting from shelters or rescues.

**Perception**

One of the ultimate goals of this campaign is to show consumers that shelters are not horrible, sad places that animals are getting mistreated at. This is done through raising awareness, thus bringing people into the shelter where they can see first hand volunteers interacting with animals, the treats and toys animals are offered, and the passion that the employees take in their work. Perception is also a huge part of the long-term recommendations which include aesthetic of the shelter, events, and displaying the volunteer program to the public.

**Marketing Budget and Financial Resources**

The entire campaign will need to be completed at little to no cost, and little time involvement in order for the shelter to be able to implement the recommendations. Although this can all be done at little to no cost there are still some major costs for advertising, and increasing shelter aesthetic. My first recommendation in order to battle these challenges would be to raise the problem to the Animal Welfare Society to see if they would be willing to increase a marketing budget for the shelter to make the necessary changes. Individual donors and even volunteers may be willing to aid in the costs of implementing marketing tactics. Often times consumers are a lot more willing to assist non-profit organizations more than the organization can imagine. By simply posting to the Facebook page that the shelter is looking to implement a marketing campaign to raise awareness for the shelter they may see a flood of people looking to help. Such sites as GoFundMe could also be utilized to raise a budget for marketing efforts, which once again is something that many volunteers would be more than willing to assist with.
## Appendix

### Table 1. SWOT Analysis

Note: A SWOT analysis assesses the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing a company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Free shots/neuter pets</strong>: before adoption all animals get their shots and are neutered, which cuts down on pet owners personal costs.</td>
<td><strong>Branding</strong>: website design, branding in general is poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low cost</strong>: Adoptions are only $35, much lower than most competing prices for animals.</td>
<td><strong>Social Media</strong>: only present on Facebook currently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offerings</strong>: upon adoption animals also receive free microchipping, a collar, and tag.</td>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong>: many people are not aware of where the shelter is located or when they have animals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrichment program</strong>: maintain animals mental and physical health with enrichment activities.</td>
<td><strong>Work Force</strong>: small number of employees, sometimes short-handed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volunteer Program</strong>: helpful to have a crew of people dedicated to the overall well being of the animals.</td>
<td><strong>Marketing</strong>: have no marketing budget, thus do no marketing efforts that are not offered for free (e.g., pet finder and the Boomerang’s weekly Pick a Pal article).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treatment of animals</strong>: animals are very well taken care of (e.g., daily walks, clean kennels, toys, fed well)</td>
<td><strong>Unpredictable</strong>: never knowing when or how many animals will be at the shelter, hard to predict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Join Social Media</strong>: join social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat.</td>
<td><strong>Competition</strong>: pet stores, breeders, rescues, other shelters, friends/family having animals that are not available at the shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advertise</strong>: add flyers/postage around town to advertise the shelter.</td>
<td><strong>Funding</strong>: lack of the proper amount of funding or donations negatively effecting the efficiency of the shelter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hire more staff</strong>: if short handed have the opportunity to add more staff or create a larger volunteer program.</td>
<td><strong>Unpredictable</strong>: never knowing when or how many animals will be at the shelter, hard to predict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open up option for donations</strong>: currently no option to donate directly to the animal shelter, donations go to the Animal Welfare Society.</td>
<td><strong>Economic</strong>: in times of recession people may not be adopting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Technology</strong>: increase the usage of technology to better aid the adoption of pets.</td>
<td><strong>Media</strong>: causing negative outlooks on shelters, making consumers not want to visit them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Program</strong>: much like the volunteer program, a group of people or person could be in charge of the social media accounts/marketing efforts.</td>
<td><strong>Capacity</strong>: reaching full capacity at the shelter during busy times (e.g., Christmas and the Fourth of July).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Consumer Perception</strong>: consumers see shelters as sad places where animals are treated poorly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Cost Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short-Term Recommendations (&lt; 3 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Redesign Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) The average hourly wage for a web designer is anywhere from $29-$39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Depending on how long the design of the website would take, an estimation of 9 hours makes the total cost range from $261-$351.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) This is something that could ultimately come at no cost through the use of volunteers. Some of the shelters volunteers may be familiar with website design, a post on Facebook could lead to someone volunteers their services, and easy free website designs programs are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Allow a donation option on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) This will be included in the web design costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Increase presence on social media platforms to connect with Laramie Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) No cost, time involvement from staff or volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium-Term Recommended Changes (3 months-1 year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create flyers/postage to put up around community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Printed poster from FedEx to hang around the community: Starts at $39.99 for an 18” x 24” poster.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Total cost assuming 10 posters are created: $399.90.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Creation of informative brochures: from FedEx starting price is $34.00 for 25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Printed flyers from FedEx to post around community: Starts at $29.99 for 50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) If in house printer is used for flyers: No additional costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Total costs to create flyers/postage assuming 10 posters, 100 flyers, and 100 brochures: $595.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Increase current advertising efforts in the area (radio, TV, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Radio Spots on certain local stations: No cost1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Television Ads: Average cost for a local 30-second spot commercial ranges from $200-$1500.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Continue to post in Boomerang Pick a Pal: No cost1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Remain Active on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Time involvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Long-Term Recommendations (&gt; 12 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Add color to walls in shelter to increase positive feelings with the shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) On gallon of paint at Walmart costs as low as $8.49.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Total Costs assuming two cans of paint is used to paint several accent walls: $16.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create events around town with dog’s present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Will vary by event, typically no cost other than time involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Display volunteer program and all they do for the animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Can be done on social media platforms: No cost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated Total Costs: $216.98 - $2446.88
Figure 1. Visual Timeline of Implementation

Short-Term Recommendations: January 2017
1. Redesign Website
2. Allow a donation option on the website
3. Increase presence on social media

Medium-Term Recommendations: March-June 2017
1. Create flyers/postage
2. Increase current advertising efforts
3. Remain active on social media

Long-Term Recommendations: July-Nov 2017
1. Add color to walls in shelter.
2. Create events
3. Showcase Volunteer Program
Figure 2. Significance Between Spending on Dog and Where Participants Purchased Dog
Figure 3. Adoption Form at Laramie Animal Shelter

ADOPTION APPLICATION

Which animal are you interested in? ________________________________

Your name: ____________________________________________________

Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / ______ Driver's license or ID number: ______ State: ______

Home Phone: ____________ Work Phone: ____________ Cell Phone: ____________

Email Address: __________________________ Employment: __________________________

Spouse/Roommate/Significant other's name(s):
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Date of birth: _____ / _____ / ______ Date of birth: _____ / _____ / ______

Date of birth: _____ / _____ / ______ Date of birth: _____ / _____ / ______

Date of birth: _____ / _____ / ______

Home address: ______________________________ City, State ____________ Zip ______

How long have you lived at this address? ________________________________

Do you:  □ own your home?  □ rent your home?  □ rent a lot space in a mobile home park?

Landlord's Name: ___________________________ Landlord's Phone: ___________________________

How many pets are in the house now? ________ dogs ________ cats ________ other

Do you have children? □ Yes  □ No  What ages: ________________________________

If you don't currently have children do you plan to have children soon? □ Yes  □ No

Is this a gift for someone? □ Yes  □ No  If so, what is their name? _______________________________

How can we contact them? ________________________________
List all pets in the residence now and any you have had during the last 5 years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Where are they now?</th>
<th>Veterinarian</th>
<th>Rabies vaccinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

IMPORTANT:

We reserve the right to refuse this application.

Adoption will take place 24 hours after application is submitted. (Exception: Applications received on Saturday will result in adoptions on Tuesday).

All adoptable animals are micro-chipped prior to leaving the shelter.

Failure to redeem an animal impounded at the earliest convenience shall be self evident, unless sufficiently rebutted, that the owner is unfit for subsequent adoption of the same or any other animal.

If your application is denied, you have the right to appeal, in writing, to the LPD Animal Control and Welfare Supervisor within three (3) days of the date of denial. Laramie Police Department Animal Control and Welfare is under no obligation to hold the animal you are interested in during the appeal process.

Applications will not be approved until the applicant is in full compliance with existing City, County and State statutes, to include licensing.

Animal adoptions are on a first come, first serve basis to approved applicants only, who are first on the premises.

I CERTIFY THAT THE LISTED INFORMATION IS TRUE AND ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND THAT FALSIFICATION OF INFORMATION CAN BE CAUSE FOR DENIAL OF THE APPLICATION.

SIGNATURE    DATE
Figure 4. Visual Comparison of Shelter Websites (Laramie Shelter vs. Denver Shelter)
Figure 5. Visual of Flyer and/or Poster Idea #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs of Adoption</th>
<th>Costs of Purebred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spay/Neuter</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shots</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microchip</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6. Visual of Flyer and/or Poster Idea #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs of Adoption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spay/Neuter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microchip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microchip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADOPT
Figure 7. Visual Chart of Where Participants Purchased Their Dog

If yes, where did you get your dog?

- Animal rescue
- Animal shelter
- Friend/Family
- Other, explain
- Do not own a dog
Figure 8. Photo Shown in Market Research Survey
Bibliography


