

Crafting Brand-Driven Marketing Communications to Engage Members and Prospects During COVID

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Overview

Crafting Brand-Driven Marketing Communications to Engage Members and Prospects

Background

- Over the last generation, many U.S. houses of worship have faced flat or declining membership driven by new alternatives to joining congregations such as apps and online programming – “flat is the new growth” is the mantra for clergy and lay leaders
- Exacerbating this trend, national dynamics such as high fixed costs for building/grounds maintenance limit funds available for member outreach while a Cleveland-specific anomaly - 5 of the 6 Reform synagogues are in a 2-mile radius – made attempts to stand out challenging
- In this context, I was hired as Suburban Temple-Kol Ami’s 1st Director of Engagement and Marketing, a two-year foundation grant-funded role that concluded in July

Objectives

- There were 4 objectives – refresh the brand, attract members by evolving marketing, retain members through 1:1 engagement, and build a foundation so attraction and retention initiatives could continue after the grant concluded

Research Methodologies

- Initial coffees with members to understand perceptions of Temple communications
- Comprehensive audit of ST-KA’s online/offline touches, ongoing audits of local competitors’ online and offline marketing, benchmarking of national organization’s marketing efforts
- Analyses of internal newsletter’s open rates/audience composition
- Discrete Google Analytics of visitors’ pathways through Temple Web site, Facebook Insights (“deeper” versus “lighter” engagement), Facebook Ad Manager (reach, cost), and cross-platform UX (number of steps to accomplish tasks)
- Interviews of clergy, lay leaders, and staff to ascertain where potential members came from and close rates by sales channel, interviews with lay leaders at Reform Temples across U.S. on engagement best practices

Select Insights

- **Brand** - ST-KA didn’t articulate a relevantly differentiated positioning and look/voice were inconsistent across touches = refine brand positioning (the differentiated “always welcome”), support across touches, employ 2 personas (Leah Looking and Mike Member) as reality check
- **Attraction** - Significantly more marketing for programs that didn’t impact member attraction than the most important drivers (conversations with rabbis, enrollment in education program) = change role of marketing from conversion to awareness
- **Engagement** – programs at the Temple and at most peer organizations used top-down programming model, a practice not always consistent with expectations = launch “member-to-member” topic groups created/managed by participants
- **Segmentation** – Cleveland Reform Jews too broad a target = focus on empty nesters, families with young children, adults interested in education

Select Impacts

- **Newsletter** - Redesigned online newsletter’s look and feel/UX; movement from weekly newsletter to daily publication drove clicks by 28%
- **Digital** - Facebook campaigns exceeded baseline by 17-54%; multi-channel promotion doubled attendance over similar concert; single-topic interior Web pages – cornerstone of experience - outperformed other pages by average of 320%
- **Engagement** – Developed and launched member-to-member engagement program that’s now in its 3rd year <https://www.suburbantemple.org/gatherings.html>

Details

Addressed Retention Challenge By Fostering Member-to-Member Engagement

Background

- Over the last generation, many U.S. houses of worship have faced flat or declining membership driven by new alternatives to joining congregations such as apps and online programming – “flat is the new growth” is the mantra for clergy and lay leaders
- COVID – which overlapped 19 of my 24-month grant as the Director of Engagement and Marketing at a Reform temple – amplified these challenges

Objective

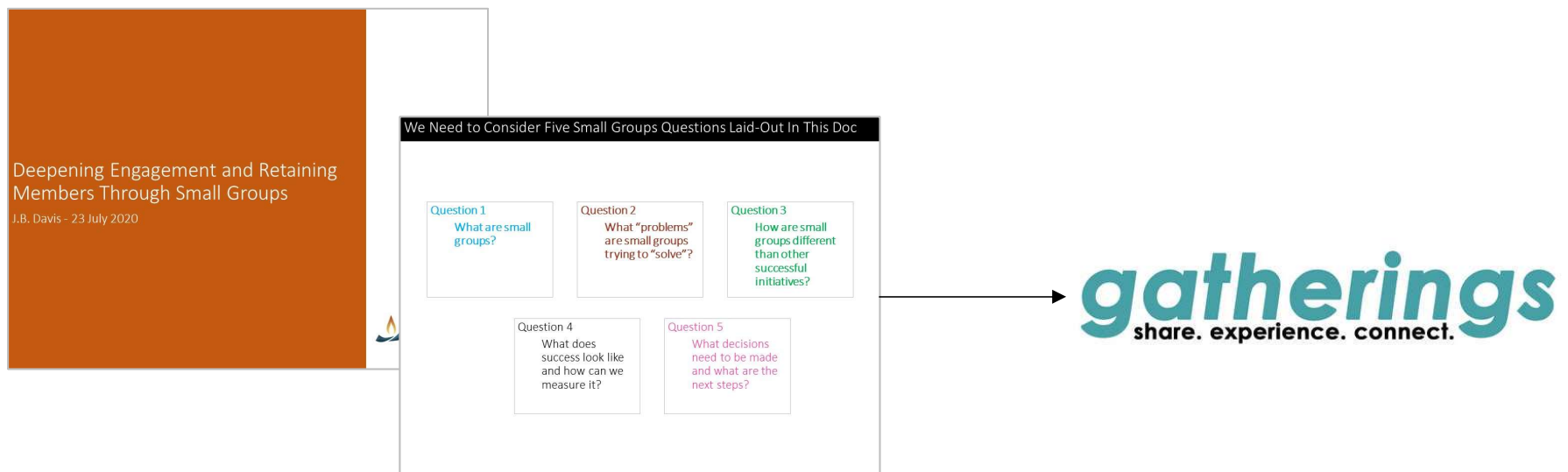
- In this context, it was critical to retain members by deepening their connection to the Temple

Role

- Interviewed Reform lay leaders across U.S. on retention best practices
- Identified that the framework of traditional initiatives – a “do-it-for-me” (DIFM) model where clergy, lay leaders, and staff created programs they believed would be of interest to members – wasn’t always addressing congregants’ needs, a key dynamic for successful retention efforts
- Made business case to clergy, lay leaders, and board to launch a pilot program based on a member-centric “do-it-yourself” (DIY) model
- Partnered with lay leaders to develop, launch, and scale pilot

Impacts

- Launch was successful and the program is now in its 3rd year <https://www.suburbantemple.org/gatherings.html>



Details

Reimagined Essential Touchpoint

FROM



Online touches (*Temple Times* weekly newsletter, bulletin, site, Facebook, YouTube) not anchored in strategy = untapped advantage in declining “category”

Brand positioning undifferentiated = category’s dynamics exacerbated

Content not linked to narratives and not prioritized = potential storytelling, helping target process information underused

Inconsistent design across touchpoints = missed opportunities for visual cues, support brand identity

Long text blocks = user experience challenging, particularly on mobile

New graphics regularly created = production traffic jams

Links to off-nav pages = seamless experience missed



TO

New tag line (“always welcome”) fostered relevant differentiation and expansion via “always learning” etc.

Moved from weekly to daily

Subject line of *TT* previewed new way to engage members with relevant content

Customer-centric redesign of *TT* – 95% of newly scannable content drives traffic to site, consistent look and feel, new messaging hierarchy – transformed it into *the source*

Newsletter’s new tile systems improved UX, reinforced consistency, improved production efficiencies, created opportunities to easily extend messaging to home page, interior pages, and Facebook

Brand voice used humor to cut through category sameness

New strategically-grounded content calendar supported both 30,000’ storytelling and program messaging

Site redesign (consistent look and feel, no off-navigation URLs, top programs given dedicated pages, content topics clustered) created powerful and scalable destination from online and offline touches

Details

Created Consistent Brand Voice

 Suburban Temple-Kol Ami
Sponsored - 

Yeah. We want to reboot 2020 too. The High Holy Days are a great time to start fresh.

C T R L
A L T
D E L

[HTTPS://WWW.SUBURBANTEMP...](https://www.suburbantemp...)
Reboot - Suburban Temple - Kol Ami [LEARN MORE](#)

whatever and however
you want to learn,

 +  = SUBURBAN TEMPLE KOL AMI

...at ST-KA you're always welcome.

whatever your stage in life,

 +  = SUBURBAN TEMPLE KOL AMI

...at ST-KA you're always welcome.

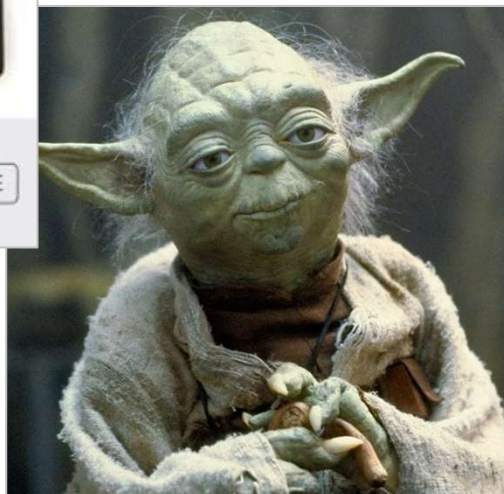
INSIDE VOICE? FEH.



It's time for kids to make really loud Haman videos and for parents to cover their ears.

Suburban Temple - Kol Ami
suburbantemple.org/purim.html

always welcome.



Jewish he's not. Wisdom he has.

Today Is *May the Fourth*.

Please interrupt your day-long celebration of all things Star Wars to click to read about the connections between "Jedi-ism and Judaism"

Details Celebrated Diversity

CELEBRATING **PRIDE** THIS MONTH.
EMBRACING DIVERSITY ALL YEAR.

Suburban Temple-Kol Ami
Always welcome.

suburbantemple.org

**Honor
Mental Health
Awareness Month**



Millions of Americans need
more support and less stigma,
more assistance and
deeper understanding *all year*.

Click to learn about our May 2nd
“Funny Women, Serious Issues”,
an evening of laughter, education,
and action in support of
Mental Health Awareness Month.



Details

Launched Content Calendar to Manage Executions Across Owned, Paid, and Earned Media

		SUBURBAN TEMPLE KOL-AMI								
		CONTENT CALENDAR ACROSS ALL MEDIA AND TOUCHPOINTS								
		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday		
		7/20/2020	7/21/2020	7/22/2020	7/23/2020	7/24/2020	7/25/2020	7/26/2020		
		Event: Board Meeting on High Holy Days	Event: Coffee w/ Rabbi Vann			Event: Coffee w/ Rabbi Shana	Event: Storytime w/ Rabbi Shana	Event: Torah Study	Event: <i>Our Tent</i> Education Classes	
						Event: Shabbat Services	Event: Torah Study	Event: <i>Our Tent</i> Education Classes		
TYPE OF MEDIA	OWNED MEDIA	Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 1	Happening This Week							
		Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 2		Happening Today	Happening Today	Happening Today	Happening Today			
		Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 3		Happening Tomorrow	Happening Tomorrow	Happening Tomorrow	Happening This Weekend			
		Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 4		New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 1	New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 2	New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 3	New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 4			
		Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 5				Torah Talk				
		Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 6	RAC Ohio Event on 7/27	RAC Ohio Event on 7/27	RAC Ohio Event on 7/27	RAC Ohio Event on 7/27	RAC Ohio Event on 7/27			
		Temple Times Daily Newsletter to Congregants - Content Topic 7					HHD Info on Site			
		Facebook Post - Topic 1		Happening Today	Happening Today	Happening Today	Happening Today			
		Facebook Post - Topic 2		New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 1	New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 2	New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 3	New Graphic - <i>Our Tent</i> [Education] 4			
		Facebook Post - Topic 3								
		Synagogue Site - Content Update 1	Continue <i>Our Tent</i> Registration Open to Members Graphic on Home Page							
		Synagogue Site - Content Update 2	Revise Tikkun Olam Page - Please See Note 2							
		Synagogue Site - Content Update 3						Home Page - Add Title and Link to High Holy Days Page		
		Synagogue Site - Content Update 4						High Holy Day Page - Add Congregational Email Content and Related PDF		
		Email to Congregation					Cong Email RE: HHD			
PAID MEDIA	Online and/or Print Publication									
EARNED MEDIA	Facebook Word-of-Mouth					Begin <i>Our Tent</i> Word of Mouth (WOM) - Please See Note 3 At Right				

Details

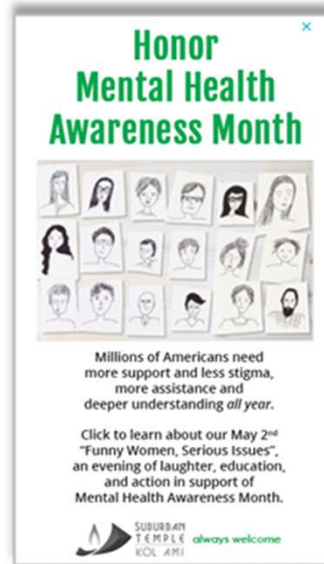
Developed Integrated Marketing Campaigns

- Integrated Campaign with Multiple Objectives – Publicize Mental Health Awareness Month, Support “Always Welcome” Positioning, Build Awareness and Drive Member Engagement - Resulted in 20% Attendance Increase Over Similar Event and 4% Ad Recall for Facebook Ad with Small Budget
- As Director of Engagement and Marketing for Suburban Temple-Kol Ami, Crafted Strategy, Wrote Copy, Art Directed Look & Feel, Developed Targeting, Liaised with Press

Paid Media – Facebook



Paid Media – Digital



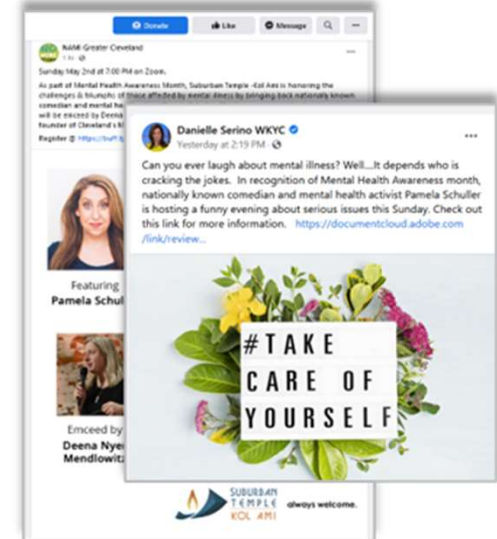
Community Outreach Social Media/Phone Calls/Emails



Owned Media – Facebook



Earned Media – Facebook



Landing Page



Paid Media – Print



Owned Media – Publications



Earned Media – Print/Digital/TV

