

## Communication Proposals

### Abstract

Veterans and pit bulls are two of the most neglected populations in this country. Everyday 22 veterans commit suicide as a result of PTSD while nearly 3,000 pit bulls are euthanized in shelters daily. The American Pit Bull Foundation (APBF) has taken on the challenge of preventing both through their newest program Operation Sidekick. Through the application of communication theories, our team consulted with APBF and provided communication proposals to help better spread the word of their mission as a preventative care non-profit. Our main goals were specifically to focus on improving storytelling and increasing fundraising through a social media presence, connecting with social and service organizations on college campuses, and developing interactive programs that educate and entertain donors.

### What is APBF?

The American Pit Bull Foundation is a non-profit organization that focuses on promoting responsible breed ownership through education, programming, and assistance. APBF provides medical and financial assistance for dogs with responsible owners. Additionally, they aid in the adoption of Pit Bulls to responsible individuals and families. One of their newest programs, Operation Sidekick, looks to pair American veterans with Pit Bulls as a way to help both communities to prevent PTSD related suicides and mass euthanasia of Pit Bulls.

### Communication Theories

#### *Cialdini's Principle's of Influence*

**Commitment and Consistency:** the impulse to bring out beliefs, values, and attitudes into line with what we have already done or decided. If people express a desire to help dogs and veterans, they should be willing to consistently give to APBF

**Social Proof:** the idea that people look to others to model their own behavior. If we show people making donations that are helping Operation Sidekick help veterans, other organizations should be more willing to consistently give to the APBF.

**Liking:** people prefer to say yes to individuals they know and like. Most people love dogs, so relying on increased exposure of the APBF's dogs and puppies could facilitate more donations. Also, increased exposure is shown to lead to liking, so increasing the digital presence will help here as well.

#### *Theories from Persuasion in Society*

**Framing:** A frame is one among a number of possible ways of seeing something, and a reframing is a way of seeing it differently; in effect changing its meaning.

**RPS Approach:** Using Simons and Jones Requirements-Problems-Strategies Approach we identified 3 needs of the APBF

**Requirements:** more consistent fundraising, greater dispersal of their message, working with limited human and material resources

**Problems:** the stigma around Pit Bulls, the stigma around PTSD, limited funds, misperceptions of the APBF

**Strategies:** keeping in mind these requirements and problems, we thought of 3 strategies to aid the APBF: targeted fundraising, managing their digital presence, more powerful storytelling

#### Targeted Fundraising:

To garner more donations, the APBF should ensure that a part of their effort has a more focused scope. A focused scope consists of targeted fundraising efforts towards specific groups who may be interested in their cause and willing to assist in soliciting donations from their network or donate funds themselves. APBF collects donations at events that they sponsor, but most of their donations are collected from those who visit their main website. To get more donations, we suggest partnering with local pet rescue centers and animal groups. We also recommend collaborating with social organizations and animal focused clubs at colleges to sponsor a puppy and get students involved in the fundraising process.

#### Storytelling:

Nonprofits and their leaders can use stories to connect their communities, funders, beneficiaries, and employees with their causes and visions. Storytelling is integral to a nonprofit's ability to advance its mission. Stories can shape people; they can inspire them to think and act differently. In order to assist the APBF, we plan to leverage the data the organization collects, along with the nationally reported statistics on Pitbull's and Veterans to enhance the important story behind the APBF. We will also assist in creating a digital or physical storage space to store stories that can be utilized when valuable.

#### Managing Digital Presence:

APBF has created a strong digital brand for their main network and cause, but the creation of Operation Sidekick is in strong need of its own digital presence. In order to garner more donations, a strong digital presence will not only spread the message, but will set their organization apart from the many rescue groups online. For such a small organization, some of their many volunteers should be used to run their social media accounts.



### Literature

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