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Senior Project Planning Report

Abstract

In order for senior citizens to feel valued and young again, a gala known as *Senior Swing* will be organized to signify the importance and love for the elderly, as well as raising awareness for Alzheimer's Disease. All the proceeds from the event will directly benefit the Alzheimer's Association due to the disease directly affecting the target market. The four main steps of the project are to properly plan for the event, buy the needed components, promote and advertise, and host an enjoyable event on the day of the gala. The gala will provide beverages, appetizers, live music, auctions, and plenty of entertainment for the elderly guests. The overall purpose of *Senior Swing* is to celebrate the lives of the senior citizens and allow them to feel young again while benefiting and raising awareness for the Alzheimer's Association.

Identify the Problem

Typically, when celebrating age, the thought of senior citizens does not come to mind. The ultimate goal for *Senior Swing* is to celebrate the lives of the senior citizens of Orange County, allowing them to feel not only young again, but truly valued through hosting an event. With Alzheimer's Disease directly affecting the target market and being the sixth leading cause

of death in America, proceeds will directly benefit and raise awareness for the Alzheimer's Association.

Of course, the event will aim towards having a large number of attendees, but still maintain a high-quality feel while raising awareness. Through proper planning, marketing, and time-management, the project can maximize the attendee size while still maintaining a high-quality event. In order for the event to be legal, proper licenses and permits will be required to ensure the safety of guests, so investing in required licenses will be necessary. Another vital component to the event is creating a website. The website will allow possible attendees to learn more about the event, what to expect, location, date, time, and an RSVP. A survey will also be generated in order to directly reach out to my target market. The survey will allow for the senior citizens' opinions to be heard and give feedback on what they will like to have at their event.

Senior Swing is a unique event because it truly celebrates the lives of Orange County's senior citizens while bringing the community together.

Analyze the Problem

In order for *Senior Swing* to be a successful event, there are many components needed to be analyzed and identified. To execute the project in the most efficient manner, the event planner will have to take into consideration the location, theme, and the date and time of the event.

First, the event planner will have to determine a location which is not only accessible, but is able to hold the maximum amount of attendees, while still maintaining a comfortable space. Since the target market of the event is senior citizens within Orange County, the venue will need to be located within the area. When considering different venues to host the event, this will ensure a greater spectrum of satisfying options.

Along with choosing a venue, the theme is a vital component to yield ultimate satisfaction for guests. Proper decorations and arrangements will provide the intended aesthetics of the event which will allow attendees to feel comfortable and pleased with the overall atmosphere. Therefore, it is critical to plan accordingly and choose an appropriate theme in order to please guests the most.

For the day of the event, it is essential to choose a suitable time and date. The event planner will need to choose a date which will accommodate to the elderly needs and their families' desires. Depending on the chosen venue, the event planner will need to comply the date and time with the venue's manager. There are many alternatives to these problems and the event planner hopes her decisions provide ultimate satisfaction for the guests.

Identify the Alternatives

There are various alternatives to make the event very successful. Each major component of the event can be properly executed in different techniques, yet still maintain the same goal.

There is an abundance of venue options within Orange County which accommodate the needs for the event. A few possible senior center locations are Crown Cove Senior Living, Senior Center in Central Park, Costa Mesa Senior Center, and the Fountain Valley Senior Recreation Center. Aside from senior center locations, the Newland Barn, the Vintage Rose, Event Loft's locations within Orange County, and the Sea Cliff Country Club are other venue options. There are also plenty of options to choose for an appropriate event theme. Themes will vary from fun and whimsical, time periods (the 60s, 70s, 80s), mature with a rustic feel, clean and simple, and other alternatives which the senior citizens might suggest. In order to gain the most satisfaction from guests, the event planner will generate a survey which asks the elderly on

what themes they will prefer and further input on suggestions. Either way, the theme will provide a comfortable environment for guests with pleasant aesthetics. To choose a proper time and date, the event planner will reach out to various senior living centers and ask what date and time works best for their residents. Also, the event planner will directly interact with the target market and include possible dates and times within the survey for the elderly to choose. While picking a date and time, the event planner will also need to consider what days comply with the chosen venue. Overall, there are many alternatives allowing *Senior Swing* to be a successful event.

Identify the Criteria

There is a wide variety of criteria which are needed to create *Senior Swing* a profitable and successful gala, such as: time, cost, and learning stretch.

Time is an incredibly important factor in order to properly host an event which will yield guest satisfaction. With the event planner being a full-time student, partaking in extracurriculars, and having a job, time is very limited, yet critical. It is essential to have appropriate time-management skills and meet the deadlines according to the timeline. The event planner will not only have to consider what times work best for her schedule, but also the time of different companies, her mentor, and people which she will work alongside. She will have to work on generating the event after the hours of 6:00 P.M on the weekdays and her free time on the weekends, while still considering others.

Cost is another essential parameter considering the proceeds will benefit the Alzheimer's Association and the materials required to construct a proper gala. The event planner is willing to spend about \$400 to startup the event by paying for the required licenses, renting a venue, website domain name, and advertisements.

Lastly, the learning stretch is crucial in order for the event planner to truly expand her knowledge in the business field. To widen her knowledge, the project will allow her to gain better communication and time-management skills, learn to put others opinions before hers, set deadlines for herself, and become a leader of something she is passionate about.

Evaluate the Alternatives

Senior Swing is divided into three parts; choosing a venue, the theme, and date and time. Regarding each possible component, there are many possible ways to successfully meet the goals. However, there is a certain way to complete the project, in order to meet the proper criteria.

To establish a location, all three criterias must be met. The event planner is willing to spend about \$400 towards the gala and hopes to obtain about an additional \$500 from family and friends to further put towards the project. The Newland Barn and Crown Cove Senior Living are eliminated options due to the venues being too small to hold the desired amount of attendees, which does not meet the learning stretch and goals. The two venue options do not meet the goals of the learning stretch due to the venues not being to sustain the desired amount of attendees. The Sea Cliff Country Club and the Vintage Rose are also eliminated because they cost far more than the event planner is willing to spend. Therefore, the location for *Senior Swing* will be held at the Central Park Senior Center. Due to the event planner being a full-time student with a busy schedule, the location is not only very accessible to her, but for the target market. The venue also fits within the price range, with six hours on a Thursday night costing \$450. Lastly, the venue is available for the date and time of Thursday, April 19th from 4:00-10:00 P.M; appropriate for the attendees.

HOW DOES # OF ATTENDEES
IMPACT LEARNING & STRETCH?

Establishing a theme for the event must meet the criteria for cost and learning stretch.

Although the clean and simple theme meets the criteria for cost, due to minimal decorations, it does not meet the learning stretch of hosting a professional and satisfactory event. The fun and whimsical and time period themes are removed from the options because they also do not meet the goal of hosting a professional event. These two themes may reflect more of a high school dance feel and not so much the feeling of a mature gala. The mature, rustic & boho theme meet the main two criterias of cost and learning stretch. This particular theme will not be under or over budget and will allow the event planner to be creative when decorating and creating an appealing space. The theme especially meets the learning stretch because the decorations will allow the event planner to establish a professional, yet aesthetically pleasing environment.

The date and time of *Senior Swing* must meet the criteria of time and cost. Although the weekends do correspond with the available time, the weekend dates do not meet the criteria of cost. At the Central Park Senior Center, weekend rental fees (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) are double the amount of weekday fees. Therefore, the weekend dates do not fit within the amount of money the event planner is willing to spend. The venue requires a minimum of six hour rental time, which will only cost \$450 to host an event on the weekday. Therefore, the event planner has chosen the date of Thursday, April 19th of 2018, because it meets both the cost and time criteria. Due to the event being considered a gala and serving appetizers and beverages, the event will be hosted in the evening. The time does not affect the personal time criteria, but the venue's owners. The desired time of 4:00-10:00 P.M fit within the venue's available hours.

Implementation :

Preparing for *Senior Swing* has been an incredibly difficult, yet rewarding project. There has been multiple and crucial steps which have come with preparing for the event - booking a venue, obtaining food and beverages to serve, booking services - live band and photographer, obtaining decorations and needed supplies, gaining sponsors, and promoting and marketing the event. Throughout the process of preparing for the event, each step required a process and obstacle for me to undergo.

In order for *Senior Swing* to even be possible, the most important part was booking a venue. The location had to be large enough to sustain guests, a live band, tables and chairs for guests, and tables to display gift baskets.. Not only did the venue have to hold all the needed supplies, but maintain a comfortable environment for guests and also allow alcohol. If the location is too small, not all necessary items for the venue will fit. I first looked into newly renovated Central Park Senior Center. I emailed the Human Resource Director, Randy Pesquera ([Email](#)) explaining the goal of my project and regarding the availability and price to rent the their Parkview Room. We then held a follow up meeting to discuss further details ([Email](#)) and toured the facility ([Tour](#)) . Although the venue pertained almost every desired criteria, the price was over my budget ([Central Park Fees](#)). I thought I could undertake the obstacle and charge \$30 per ticket to cover the finances, but I attempted a much more difficult task then I was capable of doing.

I re-evaluated my options and researched the Rodgers Senior Center, but I was not impressed by the area and the venue does not permit alcohol. Next, I researched the Red Horse Barn, but the prices were also way over my budget. I then evaluated my next option of the

Newland Barn in Huntington Beach. Lindsey Bautzer and I took advantage of the venue's open house night and were able to get a feel for the space ([Newland Barn Tour](#)). The space was the perfect size, a great location, alcohol was permitted, but the price was also above my budget. I calculated the cost to rent for five hours, including the Liability Insurance, Alcohol Filing Fee, lights, and Alcohol Processing Fee equalling \$856.00 ([Newland Barn Fees](#)). The price was much more affordable compared to the Central Park Senior Center. In order to rent the space, I emailed Shari Kowalke ([Email](#)), the CIBACS President, and obtained the non-profit Federal ID. Shari also directed me to the CIBACS Treasurer, Arlene Erickson, to obtain the needed insurance. Once I emailed Arlene, I received all the required documents to secure the venue ([Email](#)). With that being said, I went to City Hall's Community Service Department to secure the venue and came prepared with all the necessary paperwork ([Paper Work](#)) and check ([Check](#)) for the payment. Before I could make a deposit, the Department Assistant, Caroline Richards ([Business Card](#)) requested a letter from Edison's administration, stating that my event was first approved by the school. With another unexpected step to complete the process of renting a venue, I had to email our Assistant Principal, John Elliot, requesting the approval letter ([Email](#)). Unfortunately, he was unwilling to approve the letter due to alcohol being permitted. I re-evaluated my options and realized that the Newland Barn was not in my best interest after all. I would have needed to obtain security guards with alcohol, live bands were not permitted, and I felt that it would have been a difficult task to transport the seniors to a place they are unfamiliar with.

Once again, I re-evaluated my options and reached out to my mentor, Marion Miele ([Business Card](#)) and asked if her facility, Crown Cove Senior Living, was available to hold the

event. Enclosed in the email, I expressed my goals, envision for the event, and the requesting the date of May 11th. Not even a day later, Marion emailed me back and expressed that she was more than happy to have *Senior Swing* held at her facility. We scheduled a meeting and were able to decide on a color scheme of navy blue to represent the OC Alzheimer's Association ([Reason for Color Scheme](#)), the time for 3-5 P.M, appetizers and drinks provided, and I was able to preview the outside patio, the location where the event was held ([Meeting Notes](#)). After disclosing the meeting, I officially secured the venue for *Senior Swing* with no cost or insurance required.

One of the most important components to the actual event was obtaining food and drinks for guests. When I thought I was going to host the event at the Newland Barn, I reached out to a local catering company known as Kitty's Catering which received noticeable Yelp reviews ([Yelp Reviews](#)). The owner herself, called me to discuss how many guests I was looking to serve and my budget. We sent various emails regarding the goal of my project, gaining sponsors, and figuring out the kinks of my event and her schedule ([Emails](#)). The company also sent a quote on the total price of provided food ([Catering Quote](#)). Once I disclosed my option of renting the Newland Barn, I made sure to email Kitty to explain that I would not need her service anymore ([Cancellation Email](#)). Now with the venue being Crown Cove Senior Living, food, drinks, and alcohol were free of charge for me. The initial meeting that I held with my mentor, Marion discussed that the personal chefs will provide all of the appetizers and drinks. This was an incredible advantage to holding my event at Crown Cove. Obtaining food and drinks no longer required me to pay which benefitted my finances immensely. A week before the event, we

scheduled a meeting to figure out what appetizers I specifically wanted to provide for guests ([Food Request](#)) .

Another process I completed was booking the two main services for the event - a swing band and photographer. Due to me being a part of the MMET (Multimedia and Entertainment Technology) program at APA, (Academy of Performing Arts) my vocal director, Nicole Kubis was happy to have her band, the Swing Kittens play for such a great cause. I emailed the band director, Dan Methe regarding their availability and prices ([Email](#)). Before booking her band, I researched other local swing bands to compare prices and ensure I was receiving an appropriate price. Due to the Swing Kittens being the most affordable, I went ahead and confirmed the date, attire, location, and time of the event with Dan ([Email](#)). He confirmed and forwarded a contract for me to sign. With the contract signed, I forwarded the scanned contract and officially confirmed a live swing band. At the event, I delivered a check to the band for \$700 ([Contract](#)). Once again, I used my resources and contacted my uncle, Chris Viola ([Photographer Confirmation](#)). Chris is a professional photographer and agreeded to shoot and take pictures of the event for free. He created a folder for all the event pictures ([Event Pictures](#)) I also contacted a mutual friend of mine, Gabe Garcia, to create a video that showcases what occurred at the event(([Videographer Confirmation](#)). Gabe was willing to create a short video of the event for \$60 ([Video](#)) ([Videographer Invoice](#)). This particular task was probably the easiest to complete.

In order for the event to aesthetically pleasing, I needed to select a color scheme and purchase the decorations and supplies in accordance. When I met with my mentor, Marion, and secured the venue, we agreed on the color scheme of dark and navy blue. I requested that all

employees and band members to be dressed in dark blue ([Band and Staff](#)). Marion provided dark blue umbrella shades ([Umbrella Shades](#)) and table cloths ([Table Cloths](#)) as well.

The next preparation for the event was to obtain sponsors. Due to the event being a fundraiser towards the Alzheimer's Association, I needed to acquire items for gift baskets to raffle off. My mentor shared her past donation letters, but I altered the letter to fit the event ([Donation Letter](#)). Within the letter, I enclosed what the CIBACS program is, the details of my event, and the CIBACS' Federal Tax ID. I printed out a total of thirty letters and began reaching out to potential sponsors. The first day, I wore my CIBACS polo and made sure I looked very presentable and put together ([Outfit](#)). I dropped off letters and spoke to several managers about my event and the donations I was looking to receive. I went to Las Barcas, Boardwalk Burgers, Mama's on 39, Orchard Supply, Ulta Beauty, Phenix Studios, PetSmart, Petco, Polly's Pies, Happy Nails, Joann's Fabric and Craft, Ace Hardware, Lush Cosmetics, and Orange Theory. I was able to receive donations from Orange Theory ([Product Donation](#)) and a local Pet Store ([Product Donations](#)). On my second day, I dressed appropriately again and contacted Duke's, Sandy's, Blooms Flower Shop, Susie's Cakes, Kean Coffee, Rose Cafe, and Five Crowns. Later on in the project, I received other donations for the raffles. After receiving all donations, I created appealing gift baskets that contained each prize ([Gift Baskets](#)).

One of the most critical processes I underwent was promoting the event. I needed to efficiently promote the event because the more guests meant the more money I would raise for the Alzheimer's Association. I first created an Instagram account ([Instagram Page](#)) to promote the event to a younger audience. Knowing that Instagram was not particularly towards my target market, I knew the younger audience has the power to reach out to their elderly and the page

would help my sponsors see a brief overview of my project. Along with creating an Instagram page, I generated a website ([Website](#)) for guests to RSVP and learn about the project, the cause, the CIBACS program, and much more. I generated the website through Wix and had six menu options - Home, About, RSVP, Sponsors, Donate, and Contact. I made sure to make the website clean, accessible, and easy to read. I especially made sure that the RSVP page was easy to follow and fill out. I also created a flyer through Canva ([Flyer](#)), which provided a brief overview and the critical components of the event. Due to the event already being held at a senior living center and space limited, I did not need to promote the event as much because my target market already lives there. I handed out the flyers to the residents and made sure they were aware of the event. I also texted and emailed family friends to come and support. Yet again, this was another advantage to having the event held at a senior living facility.

On May 9th, the day of the event, I truly took on the role of a leader. After my first period class, I picked up last minute donations from Soul Cycle and Planet Beauty. I finalized all the gift baskets and created cards that stated what was in each basket ([Placards](#)). I arrived at the venue at 1:00 with the CIBACS flag and poster ([CIBACS](#)), all the gift baskets, and four flowers for center pieces ([Center Pieces](#)). Marion and I set up about thirty solo chairs, three round tables with chairs for guests to eat and sit, three tables for the gift baskets, and one table for the food and beverages. I then went ahead and talked to the chefs regarding appetizers. The chefs agreed to my request on making sliders, a cheese and cracker plate, shrimp, bruschetta, and brownies. The bartender of the facility was in charge of providing beer and red and white wine. Due to me being underage, I was unable to help in that component of the project. I then arranged all the gift baskets with their cards and placed cups in front of them for guests to put their raffle tickets. My

Grandma Joy was in charge of collecting the cash or checks from guests and handing them raffle tickets. I charged \$5 for one ticket and \$10 for three tickets. The band, photographer, and videotographer arrived twenty minutes before the event and I instructed them on what I needed. After finalizing the gift baskets, the band, food ([Food](#)), and beverages, guests began to arrive at 3:00 ([Guests](#)). The event lasted till 5:00 and *Senior Swing* was concluded.

Senior Swing was a process which included preparation for the event, the day of the event, and after the event. All proceeds from the event were directly donated to the Alzheimer's Association in order to further the research in finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. All in all, I was able to bring the community of Orange County together in celebration of our senior citizens ([Event](#)) and raise \$1,089.21 for the Alzheimer's Association.

Evaluate the Outcomes :

The final outcome of my senior project turned out to be incredibly successful for various reasons. Through my large learning stretch, I was able to truly expand my problem solving skills. I took on the responsibility of a true event planner and used every opportunity to my advantage. I was able to learn from the mistakes I made, as well as the obstacles I overcame. Not only did I expand my problem solving skills, I learned how to efficiently and successfully plan an event. I created a very professional, high quality, and well-loved event. Along with learning how to plan an event, I furthered my communication skills - written and orally. All in all, my project was an incredible success due to expanding my problem solving skills, learning how to become an efficient event planner, and furthering my communication skills.

The most important factor which allowed my event to be successful was expanding my problem solving skills. The majority of my time was spent looking for a venue, when little did I

know that the best option was right at my fingertips. Re-evaluating my venue options many times, I learned how to solve the problem and use my resources to my advantage. Prior to this project, I had an established connection with my mentor, therefore I was easily able to obtain a venue by utilizing my connections. Another problem I was able to overcome was managing a budget while still hosting a high quality event ([Income Statement](#)). Obtaining a live swing band and a photographer can be extremely expensive. As a high school student with limited finances, I had to find a so called “loophole” to obtain the needed services. Knowing that a swing band can cost up to a \$1,500, I knew I had to utilize my resources again. I reached out to my vocal director, Nicole Kubis and she was able to provide me with an affordable price for her swing band ([Invoice](#)). I also reached out to my uncle, Chris Viola, who is a professional photographer. Instead of expending more money, I was able to secure a photographer, free of charge ([Photographer](#)). Another problem I solved was my personal fear of face-to-face communication with people I was not familiar with and in a position of power. To gain the needed sponsors, I needed to speak to various managers, face-to-face. In order to overcome this fear, I looked over my donation letter ([Donation Letter](#)) and prepared a short speech so I knew exactly what to say. Preparing a short speech allowed me to feel comfortable and more prepared when speaking to different people. All in all, I was able to expand my problem solving skills through finding the needed loopholes, using my resources, and preparing beforehand.

Secondly, the event was a success due to me learning how to become an efficient event planner. As a high school student, I had never planned an event before *Senior Swing*. Organization is key to event planning so I made sure to maintain all of the important and needed papers in an organized folder. Like stated above, I also learned how to use my resources to the

best of my ability to make the event cost efficient yet still professional. As an event planner, it is also critical to properly promote the event. I utilized my technology skills and made an appealing flyer ([Flyer](#)) to attract my target market. Being aware of my target market, I learned how to properly promote towards the elderly. Being an event planner also entails working with others. Although I was in charge of the event, I still needed to learn how to work well with others. I learned how to properly work with sponsors, contact owners of different venues, and work alongside my mentor.

Lastly, my oral and written communication skills progressively advanced through the project which allowed the event to be successful. I expanded my oral skills through face-to-face communication with sponsors. Along with that, when searching for potential venues, I had to properly communicate with different owners regarding their policies and requirements. Lastly, my oral communication skills advanced through holding meetings with my mentor. Not only did my oral communication skills progress, but also my written skills. I learned how to conduct well written and professional emails ([Email Examples](#)) when reaching out to potential sponsors, communicating with my mentor, and reaching out to different services - catering, band, and photographer.

In conclusion, Senior Swing was the ultimate success due to my problem solving skills expanding, becoming an efficient event planner, and learning how to properly communicate with others. Overcoming different obstacles and learning from mistakes helped to further myself as a person and create an incredibly successful event for Orange County. I learned a lot from this project and gained so much value, from just one experience. The project was incredibly

beneficial in teaching me various life lessons which I know that I will carry on for the rest of my life, whether it be personal or business related.