



Client: SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

The Team

Alexandra Roberts – *Team lead/ Primary Client Contact*

Abigail Sarfo – *Research and Copywriter*

Emmanuel Chidueme – *Creative Designer*

Executive Summary

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) is an international Catholic voluntary organization and ministry dedicated to serving those in need and alleviating poverty. The SSVP operates

through local conferences or chapters, each typically associated with a parish. These conferences are made up of volunteers who provide direct assistance to people experiencing poverty or other forms of need within their communities. This assistance can include food pantries, thrift stores, soup kitchens, and providing emergency financial assistance to individuals and families facing hardship.

This is a communications plan following a communications audit conducted on the SSVP Hamilton in November 2023. It contains a Situational and SWOT analysis which identifies SSVPs' needs, problems, or opportunities. It also identifies clear communications objectives SSVP can work with and its present and potential audiences. Clear communication strategies, tactics, and methods of evaluation of the effectiveness of these are also documented. This plan is geared towards increasing awareness of the organization to promote its services and attract more customers than it had previously in Hamilton.

Situational Analysis

The primary communication channels of SSVP Hamilton are through volunteers, newsletters, church bulletins, and conferences and events.

However, the organization seeks to expand its reach to new audiences such as businesses in Hamilton and capitalize on existing channels such as the website and Facebook for effectiveness, while exploring new channels.

The goal of this plan is to increase awareness of SSVP Hamilton as a not-for-profit organization, attract more customers, volunteers, and donations at the stores, and generate funds and donations, particularly corporate donations.

SWOT Analysis of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SSVP) in Hamilton:

Strengths:

1. **Strong Volunteer Network:** SSVP Hamilton has a dedicated and committed volunteer base. In 2023, the organization had 144 active volunteers. This allows SSVP to efficiently deliver programs and services in Hamilton.
2. **Established Reputation:** The organization has existed in Hamilton since 1865 and has built a solid reputation in serving those in need and making.
3. **Extensive Partnerships:** SSVP Hamilton has cultivated partnerships and relationships with various community members, organizations, and businesses even internationally

through programs like Twinning and examples like Mary's Ark. This enhances its ability to access resources and collaborate on initiatives.

4. **Diverse Range of Services:** SSVP Hamilton offers a comprehensive array of services, including thrift stores, food assistance, housing support, financial aid, and advocacy, addressing multiple dimensions of needs in the community.

Weaknesses:

1. **Resource Constraints:** Like many non-profit organizations, SSVP Hamilton may face challenges in terms of limited funding and resources, which could impact its ability to meet the growing demand for services. This has led to campaigns like Help Us Grow!
2. **Reliance on Donations:** The organization heavily relies on donations in kind, financial and volunteerism. This makes it vulnerable to fluctuations in funding and economic downturns.
3. **Geographic Reach:** Despite its presence in Hamilton, SSVP Hamilton's services may not reach all individuals and communities experiencing poverty within the city. The position of being a catholic organization and funded through church conferences may be a barrier for non-Christians who are in need. This leaves some underserved populations without adequate support.

Opportunities:

1. **Expansion of Donations:** Due to its established reputation, SSVP can explore and seek corporate support or partnerships with businesses to support the services and programs provided.
2. **Expansion of Services:** SSVP Hamilton could explore opportunities to expand its service offerings or reach new demographics within the community. This will also open the organization up to support from diverse community members.
3. **Technology Integration:** Embracing digital platforms and social media could enhance its awareness, volunteer coordination, and fundraising activities.
4. **Advocacy and Policy Influence:** SSVP Hamilton could leverage its expertise and community connections to advocate for policy changes at a local and regional levels.

Threats:

1. **Economic Instability:** Economic fluctuations and downturns will pose significant challenges to SSVP Hamilton's financial sustainability and ability to meet the needs of its beneficiaries.
2. **Competition for Resources:** The organization faces competition from other non-profit organizations and social service agencies for funding and volunteer support within Hamilton.

3. Social Stigma: Negative perceptions like serving only Christians, or stereotypes associated with poverty could hinder its efforts to engage with potential donors, volunteers, and community partners.

Audience

Primary Audiences

- Donors (Individuals, Corporations, and Foundations)
- Volunteers aged 14 to 65
- Families and Neighbours in Need

Secondary Audiences

- The unhoused in Hamilton
- Working Poor
- Single Moms
- Newcomers
- Elderly on Fixed Income

Theme- Volunteer informational booth with a mock thrift store showcase called Vinnie's Boutique.

Budget

<u>Material</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Venue	Free	No permits required to set up in a high school.
Table	Free	Provided by school.
Brochures	\$73.99 / 50 brochures	Estimate from https://staplescanada.webprint.com/

Flyers	\$37.50 / 50 flyers	Estimate from https://staplescanada.webprint.com/
Tablecloth	\$5	One-time purchase.
Clothing	Free	From SSVP's thrift store.
Clothing Racks	Free	From SSVP's thrift store.
Pull-Up Banner	Free (\$150 if need to purchase)	SSVP already has a banner, one-time purchase if necessary. Estimate from https://www.4imprint.ca/

Total Cost: \$116.49 (\$266.49 if banner must be purchased)

Event Team

Alex (Team Lead and Primary Contact): As the team lead and primary contact with the client and chaplain, Alex took on the leadership role. She was responsible for coordinating communication with the client, securing the location for the booth event by sending out emails to different schools, and acting as the liaison between the team and the client.

Abigail (Research and Copywriting): Abigail's role involved conducting research related to the event and the SSVP organization. She was responsible for gathering information about the SSVP's mission, services, and volunteer opportunities. Additionally, Abigail handled copywriting tasks, which included drafting email communications.

Emmanuel (Research and Creative Design): Emmanuel was tasked with conducting research and designing the creative pieces used for the event. This involved researching effective strategies for attracting volunteers, designing visually appealing materials such as brochures, posters, and flyers, and ensuring that the booth's visual presentation effectively communicated the SSVP's message and mission. He was also responsible for designing and sending out thank you messages.

The Details

- The team had meetings to determine a fitting event concept that will help us in achieving the goal of increasing awareness of the organization. We decided on the informational booth and pitched the idea to the client in our first meeting and they loved the idea.
- The team developed and submitted a critical path for the event.

- The team assigned roles depending on the preferences and strengths of team members
- The team then researched ideas for the informational booth and detailed the theme ideas and their requirements.
- The team had challenges securing a venue for the booth but through the client, we got in touch with the Chaplain of Bishop Ryan Catholic School and secured a venue for the booth.
- The team deliberated with the client and came to a consensus on having a mock thrift store on-site as well as selling lottery tickets at the event.
- The team designed promotional materials and forwarded them to the client for approval.
- The team visited the thrift store two weeks before the events and selected the display items and picked up the necessary volunteer forms for the event.
- The team printed all promotional items, purchased additional set up materials.
- The team showed up at the venue, set up together with the client, and had the booth running successfully for two hours.

Promotion

- The team utilized innovative promotional strategies to raise awareness and motivate student participation in the SSVP informational booth event at Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School.
- In addition to traditional methods like distributing posters to teachers for display in classrooms, we designed an engaging ad to run on the school's monitors a week before the event.
- The key messages emphasized the organization's mission of serving those in need and highlighted volunteer opportunities specifically tailored to students.
- These messages were conveyed through visually appealing graphics and persuasive writing, detailing fun and meaningful ways for students to spend their volunteer hours.
- By leveraging both physical and digital platforms within the school environment, we effectively reached our target audience and generated excitement and interest in the event among students and staff.
- The team also wrote and pitched a feature article on the organization to media outlets in Hamilton.

Just-In-Case-Planning

- **Weather Contingency:** We arranged a backup indoor location with the school administration in case of bad weather, ensuring that the event could proceed smoothly without disruption if necessary. This proactive measure minimized the risk of

cancellation due to unfavorable weather conditions, which came in handy since our event day ended up being a rainy day.

- **Technical Issues:** We prepared backup equipment such as laptops and internet to mitigate the risk of technical failures.
- **Low Attendance:** To address the possibility of low attendance, we devised strategies to actively engage with students and teachers in high-traffic areas of the school; early morning and lunch break times and giving out free lottery tickets. We distributed promotional materials and personally invited individuals to visit the booth, thereby increasing awareness, engagement and encouraging participation.
- **Volunteer Shortage:** In the event of a shortage of volunteers to staff the booth, we had contingency plans in place to seek assistance from faculty members or the chaplain. This was to ensure that there would be adequate coverage and support throughout the event.
- **Communication Breakdown:** We established clear communication channels among team members, our client and with the school administration to address any potential miscommunications or misunderstandings promptly. Additionally, we maintained backup contact information for key stakeholders to prevent communication failures.
- **Logistical Challenges:** To mitigate logistical challenges such as transportation delays or unexpected changes to the event schedule, we maintained flexibility in our planning and had alternative transportation options available if needed. This allowed us to adapt to unforeseen circumstances and keep the event running smoothly.

Evaluation

1. **Volunteer Metrics:** This metric was the key to determining if we achieved our goal. The plan was to recruit ten volunteers at the event. We ended up with fifteen volunteers.
2. **Lottery Ticket Sales:** The plan was to sell at least four tickets and we ended up with a donation of \$40 to the lottery tickets that was later used as a promotional tool to recruit more volunteers. This homed in on the “What is in it for me?” part of the planning.
3. **Thrift Sales:** Though the plan was to increase awareness of the SSVP thrift stores with these props, we garnered much attention and made a \$15 sale at the end of the day.
4. **Post-Event Evaluation:** The organization will measure actual show ups of volunteering students post-event to determine the increase in volunteering by August 2024 which is set for the SSVP Annual Dinner and Dance Gala.