

Assignment 1

I worked with the YMCA of Greater Houston for several years which is where I got to know Lesley Zimmer, the head of membership and wellness for the Trotter location. Lesley also runs the marketing channels for the facility which is why I thought it would be a great opportunity to speak with her for this project. In this paper, I will be discussing the vision and understanding of how the YMCA handles its money, the goals they pursue, the challenges they face, and what direction I would take the YMCA.

Vision:

The YMCA nonprofit has two types of income: Unrestricted and restricted funds. Restricted funds are given with a particular expectation of where it's used and can't be redistributed to other things. Unrestricted funds are when people give money and place their trust in the organization to put it to good use. YMCA tries to get unrestricted funds as it lets them shift with the community and put it where it's needed. The YMCA operational arm takes funds from members to run its facility, membership funds are used separately from their philanthropic funds. The YMCA receives donations from staff, fundraising campaigns, and donors all of which contribute to the philanthropic efforts for the organization.

Some of the focuses right now are isolation for the older adult population, teens, and inclusivity, along with the onset of BLM (Black Lives Matter) to really give it the attention it needs. Recently the YMCA of Greater Houston has invested in an equity innovation center in partnership with Reliant. It focuses on education, building diversity and strengthening efforts of inclusion. Trotter has hosted several events virtually regarding Black History Month and operated a fundraising campaign called "Operation Backpack" focused on giving supplies and backpacks to several thousand kids.

The Trotter facility is currently operating at about 50% capacity but as an association, the YMCA of Greater Houston is functioning just fine. The Trotter YMCA is a big moneymaker for the association and its goal is to break even. If there's a surplus the Trotter location uses it to cover any YMCA facility that can't meet its operating costs. On the business side, facilities are running at half capacity. Cuts were made in programs and staffing while marketing itself as a "hurting" gym to attract donors. While physical events are canceled, the nonprofit side of the YMCA is thriving. From events like Harvey, the YMCA as a nonprofit receives gifts and grants due to disasters that also lead to partnerships such as with Reliant.

Goals:

The nonprofit association goals haven't adjusted much and still aim to promote wellness, along with youth development. However, at the business level facilities had to adjust. Currently the facility's goals changed to retain as many members as they can, to help recover and to eventually move up to full capacity. To help recover and reach the goal of expanding membership use, the YMCA has introduced what is called "impact" memberships. This type of membership gets members involved at a lower rate and the money is used as philanthropic funds for the facility.

To help reach the goal of bringing in members, the YMCA had to strategically market and appeal to audiences' concerns. The big issue with consumers is not feeling safe in public places. To appeal to that audience, Trotter has supplied a virtual platform for both at the gym and at home. Since many are still not ready to return, the focus was shifted to addressing their marketing channels. The YMCA is now doing commercials, radio ads, and providing a consistent message across all social media to make sure the brand is very much known.

Challenges:

The pandemic has caused many challenges that have created tensions throughout the marketing and planning for the organization. Trotter struggled due to its inability to engage in grass roots marketing and business fairs. In-person events had to be shut down and they were forced to only market virtually. Along with the inability to meet with people, the organization couldn't meet its annual budget which put a lot of pressure on the organization. The YMCA didn't have anyone come in for over 3 months, decimating the budget and resulting in several facilities shutting down. The pandemic also forced the YMCA to speed up its shift to digital platforms and virtual gym courses to keep up with audience expectations.

Recommendation:

During this time, many people are reluctant to be in a room where everybody shares equipment, so the move to a virtual platform was a great idea but not enough. My recommendation would be to expand on virtual platforms along with making full programs available digitally. There's a lot that can be done with opening a virtual option as an untapped market. Options can range from personal lessons, live streaming group sessions, premade workout sessions, renting equipment/in-person solo sessions, to name a few. Measuring this should be from purchase sales of online courses and online attendance.

The next change I would make would be to shift the marketing message. I think advertising virtual programs would be its best move, as it would appeal to members not ready to come in person but still want to exercise. Lots of gyms are struggling, especially for-profit gyms as they can't receive subsidies from government/doners and fall back on reserves, which can give the YMCA an advantage to open a new market campaign. This can be measured by tracking website traffic and see if the new marketing campaign has a positive effect.

March 22, 2021

James Robert

Box 9

56654 Little Whinging



Dear Mr. Robert:

In 2020 we faced a global pandemic that greatly affected the YMCA. We will continue to deal with the lasting implications for some time. Because of your history with our organization, we wanted to inform you about what's going on because we know you care about our mission and the help we provide to those who need it.

Starting this summer, we are implementing new services and reintegrating systems/organizational events. Our goal is to create a safe environment in our facilities for patrons and youth, as well as address social responsibility during these trying times.

Norma's story

The YMCA has been an important factor in many lives and seeks to make a positive impact on people such as Norma.

Being a single mother, Norma was looking for a place where her daughter Norjelly could stay and feel safe while Norma is at work. She works late hours and could not afford the help she needs until finding the YMCA. Norjelly is now growing up loving the Y and sees it as a place she likes to call a home away from home. While at the YMCA, she has been participating in programs such as After School, Camp, and Dance for over 2 years. The After School program allows her to get help with her schoolwork, participate in fun activities that reinforce creative thinking and develop social skills.

Norma no longer worries about her daughter being unsafe or isolated after school. Instead, she is in a safe and nurturing environment. Norma has seen a great change in her daughter's behavior and is very happy having Norjelly at the Y. When asked about their experience, Norma commented, "She's much more sociable, active and involved. Her grades have improved and she talks about her future, about becoming a lawyer one day."

Taking a step to change

To sustain a place that enhances wellness and wellbeing for people in the community like Norma and her daughter, we need your help.

During this unforeseen pandemic we have taken the chance to expand our services, but doing so presents challenges as well. With regular events and fundraisers canceled due to COVID-19, we started the “Rebuilding Campaign”. Your contribution will help us bring focus on 3 key aspects of the campaign: our facility, our programs, and our giving.

- Improving our facility will enable us to provide a safe space for our adult patrons and youth services, as well as other facility advancements
- Upgrading our digital/online programs will make low-cost services and resources more broadly available
- Enhancing our ability to give will increase events such as food distribution, clothing drives and educational opportunities for students

By volunteering here at the YMCA you’ve shown interest in, and commitment to, making a positive impact. For people like Norma and her daughter who need help, we ask you to join us as we bring the YMCA of Greater Houston to its full potential. With a gift of \$15, \$30, \$60 or more today, you’ll help us change lives.

Your interest in the YMCA allows us to continue creating a stronger community and bringing about positive change!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Miller-Schumacher', with a stylized, flowing script.

Aaron Miller-Schumacher

Marketing Coordinator

March 31, 2021

James Robert

Box 9

56654 Little Whinging



Dear James,

From all of us here at the YMCA, we thank you for your commitment to our mission. Your gift of \$60 received on March 22nd helps provide the resources to make our goal a reality. Because of your generous donation, we can continue developing our programs and community service.

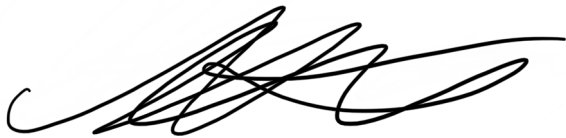
When the pandemic took over the city it exposed critical issues that need attention on behalf of those who can't do it all themselves. For the past year the YMCA has operated a monthly food drive to assist individuals who can't afford food on their own. The Y has provided meals to over 200,000 people since the start of the pandemic. Your contribution helps us continue these events that change lives.

Your support enables us to continue delivering food and other household essentials, plus reestablish our childcare program to help parents get back to work. Your donation specifically went to the purchase of cleaning products for our childcare facility. Creating a clean, safe environment for kids and staff builds trust with parents. With a successful re-launch of the program, the staff, children, and parents are all very grateful for your support.

Following the success of our childcare program, our next step we plan to take is implementing our digital programs. We will send you updates as we make progress towards our goals of implementing new programs and enhancing current ones. Once the pandemic ends, we invite you to visit our facility in person or tour our online programs.

Mr. Robert, your continued support helps us build a stronger community while creating a place that enhances wellness and wellbeing. We extend our sincerest gratitude for your generosity. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach me at 832-281-9942.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Miller-Schumacher', with a stylized, cursive flourish.

Aaron Miller-Schumacher

Marketing Coordinator