

Branding Your YARG Program

Toolkit

INTRODUCTION

There are nine reasons why it is important to tell your story – your program story, participant story, partnership story – with the underlying goal of branding and promoting your critical mission. Stories do the following:

- Convey purpose
- Provide information
- Create value
- Generate investment
- Inspire action
- Facilitate sustainability
- Connect people to your program and each other
- Promote institutional knowledge
- Our brains are hardwired to process and store information in the form of stories

The Branding Your YARG Program Toolkit is designed to provide effective tips and strategies to inform your stakeholders and your community at-large about the YARG program successfully. We all have a story to tell and as YARG grantees you are changing lives for young adults throughout the country. Whether you are new to grant funding or a seasoned grantee, there are always new stories to tell and deliver using existing and emerging communication platforms.

The Toolkit also provides resources for additional information on sound branding and marketing practices as well as examples of effective stories for press releases, newsletters, or reports.

TIPS AND STRATEGIES

A strong branding campaign requires meaningful discussions with your program leadership and project team. Where there is buy-in from the top, there is strong support for development and implementation.

Your full team should answer the following questions:

- ✓ What is your brand?
- ✓ Who is your target audience?
- ✓ How to effectively communicate and build relationship with the target audience?

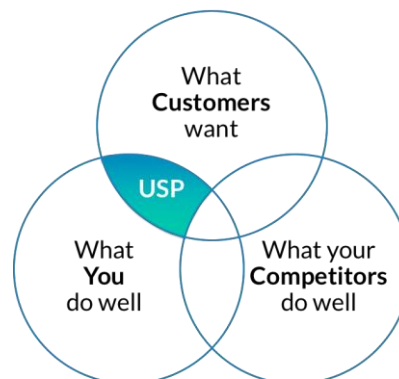
The goal of marketing is to create lasting partnerships/relationships with your target audience.



- **Branding** is identifying attributes to create an emotional and/or psychological response in the target audience that (hopefully) leads to sustained connection and brand loyalty.

Step 1: Build the Brand

- Identify attributes that make your brand exceptional → AUDIT OF VALUE
- These attributes differentiate you in the marketplace → UNIQUE SELLING POSITION



Step 2: Know Your Audience

- ▶ It is critically important that you “know” them before meeting them.
- ▶ The more you “know” them the better you can determine *how* to engage them.
- ▶ **The AVATAR Principle**
 - Ideal customer/partner
 - Fictitious person with real traits
 - Strategize on relationship-building
 - The goal: magnify their profile traits to spur action

Step 3: Targeted (Effective) Marketing

Now that you’ve...

1. Done an internal AUDIT OF VALUE and developed a UNIQUE SELLING POSITION
2. Identified your TARGET AUDIENCE

You are...

3. In an informed position to determine how to most effectively connect with the target audience by communicating value.

The Essential Question is to ask “What medium, method, and tools will you use to communicate your USP to the target audience?”

SOCIAL MEDIA

There are multiple social media channels globally being used to connect and share. It is important to research the options and choose the one that your targeted audience most commonly use. For instance, a young adult audience tends to dial into Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok more so than Facebook or LinkedIn.

Once you have identified the suitable platform, then you need to think about your messaging and frequency. For a young adult audience, the shorter and more frequent gets their attention.

Here is an example of a strong social media page from YARG grantee, AMIkids, Inc.



Why is this posting so effective? It does the following:

The Brand: AMI Kids Miami-Dade

- Positive
- Caring
- Creates real solutions
- Stackable credentials
- Successful outcomes

The Target Audience: At-Risk Youth

- Youth (at risk)
- Eager to learn and grow

The Marketing: Social Media Outreach

- **Medium:** Social Media
- **Method:** [Video](#) and picture posts with poignant captions
- **Tools:** Success story post

Here are some other general tips when targeting youth on Social Media:

- ✓ Engage the audience with a call to action (have them do something like reach out to the organization by providing a contact person)
- ✓ Use a participant story – someone they can relate to
- ✓ Give them something of value – why should they be interested in your program
- ✓ Describe the benefits
- ✓ Post pictures – a visual goes a long way!
- ✓ Be active/post frequently

RESOURCES

Apprenticeship.Gov

Resource Hub	www.apprenticeship.gov/resource-hub
Virtual Apprenticeship Resources	www.apprenticeship.gov/delivering-apprenticeships-virtually
Federal Agency Apprenticeship Programs	www.apprenticeship.gov/federal-agency-apprenticeship-programs
Service Members and Veterans	www.apprenticeship.gov/career-seekers/service-members-and-veterans
Diversity and Inclusion	www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/diversity-and-inclusion-apprenticeship

Getting Started with Social Media: Part One (Youth Career Connect Webinar)

- https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/01/15/15/27/YCC-Content/Getting_Started_with_Social_Media_Part_One

Getting Started with Social Media: Part Two (Youth Career Connect Webinar)

- https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/01/15/15/27/YCC-Content/Getting_Started_With_Social_Media_Part_Two

Make Your Social Media Sing (Youth Connections Newsletter)

- https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/01/15/15/27/YCC-Content/Make_Your_Social_Media_Sing

Social Media Tips and Tricks: Part One (Youth Connections Newsletter)

- https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/01/15/15/27/YCC-Content/Social_Media_Tips_and_Tricks_Part_1

Social Media Tips and Tricks: Part Two (Youth Connections Newsletter)

- https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/01/15/15/27/YCC-Content/Social_Media_Tips_and_Tricks_Part_2

APPENDIX

“Sharing your Program’s Story”

When your employment and training programs succeed at moving your participants from training to employment, you have a great “Program Story” to share. A “Program Story” not only focuses on the accomplishments of your program; it highlights your project’s impact on your participants, employers and community as well as your performance (data) outcomes. A “Program Story” can also focus on your partnerships and organizational development.

In addition, program stories serve as a communication and marketing tools that can be used to recruit participants, engage employers and win the support of prospective funders. The below “Program Story” focuses on “Performance.” There are two additional “Program Stories” (see attached) that focus on “Partnerships” and “Organizational Development.”

A good “Program Story” incorporates the following:

- A headline
- A hook
- A description of the grant program
- Main partners/collaborators
- The specific goals of the program and current results against goals
- The impact on the community

See below an example of a good “Program Story”

Brookdale Return to Work Puts People Back to Work and Helps Businesses Grow

Hook - The first sentence highlights the problem

Goals of the Program and Current Results - They use current data to frame the impact

In 2014, the region of Brookdale faced a multifaceted labor-force issue: a rapidly expanding need for Advanced Manufacturing professionals contrasted with the severely limited capacity for training those professionals.

The Brookdale Return to Work program partnered with Brookdale Community College and local Advanced Manufacturers to establish the Brookdale Partnership for Advanced Manufacturers, specifically designed to broaden training availability, increase apprenticeships and on-the-job training opportunities, and establish a region wide Advanced Manufacturing program. By closely working with the community college and the local employers, they designed a win-win model that meets the needs of job seekers and businesses.

To date, they have enrolled 650 participants into training, exceeding their original goal of 500. As a result, 400 of these participants have earned a credential and 375 have been

Headline - Title is designed to capture the attention of employers

Grant Program and Main Partners/Collaborators - Describes the program/activity that was implemented. The project’s partners and the purpose of the project are clearly presented.

placed in Advanced Manufacturing jobs. Through their employer partnership with IDEA-LA their veterans have received the skills they need to get back to work. Of the 375 participants that have been placed in high skilled jobs, IDEA-LA has employed 100 of those individuals and 75 were veterans. Additionally, they have exceeded the original average wage at placement with the current wage being \$26.50, more than five dollars over the original goal.

Impact on the Community -
They shared how their program is impacting the community

Tina Clarke, the executive director of Brookdale AMP, said the project is also designed to address any barriers that might prevent the unemployed from successfully navigating their chosen career path. "One of our current participants who was unemployed became aware of our program; took the training seriously, and successfully completed his welding class and he received his certification. A fabrication company hired him at \$28 per hour." Tina also shares, "we're committed to ensuring that our project's graduates have the hard skills and soft skills needed for long-term employment. Our community partners provide mentors to our participants and our participants have created a pay it forward model and become mentors to our new enrollees."

Contact Information -
They provided contact information which makes it easier for the reader to reach the right person as quickly as possible

To find more about how Brookdale AMP is impacting their community call Tina Clarke at 222-222-2222 or visit the project on the web at www.BrookdaleAMP.org.

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“Sharing your Program’s Story: Organizational”

A good “Organizational Development Program Story” incorporates the following:

- A headline
- A hook
- A description of the issue
- A description of the benefits of the organizational change
- The impact on the organization

Headline - Title is designed to capture the attention of the reader

See below an example of a good “Program Story” on Organizational Development

The Timberline Outreach Network Voted Best Non-Profit to Work for in Fox County

Hook - The first sentence highlights the scenario in -

The staff at Timberline Outreach Network care – about each other. Every morning, they start the day with a yoga and meditation session. They eat lunch together at a 4-Star rated lunch cafeteria. In the afternoon, the Executives and staff take a 15-minute walk on the surround nature trails before clocking out. Sounds too good to be true? It was recently voted the best non-profit to work for in Fox County. Last year, it was a very different picture.

Issue and Solution - Describes the issue and what approach the leadership took to address it.

When Alice James, Executive Director, noticed a spike in staff turnover, low staff engagement in staff meetings, and negative feedback from customers, she realized she had a problem. Ms. James shared her observations with her Board of Directors and their Treasurer suggested human centered design (HCD). Ms. James knew she had to do something, especially if it was impacting their customers. After reading more on the subject, she invited a few fellow Board members and leadership staff to take an online introduction course on HCD. The course changed their perspective instantly.

Ms. James and a core team of leadership and staff began piloting a staff retention program, which explored the staff issues and concerns. The result lead to the creation of wellness programs that would enhance the staff’s productivity and motivation. They implemented a leadership training course for junior project managers. They consulted with environmental architects and found their facility and campus could be enhanced with a just a few sustainable upgrades.

Impact on the Staff - They shared how it has impacted their staff.

Troy Neals, an Intake Specialist, has worked at the Network for five years. “I feel like I work for a completely different company. The changes the leadership has made in such a short period of time is incredible. They listened and cared. I love my job and the people I work with. We are truly there for each other!”

“Sharing your Program’s Story: Partnership”

A good “Partnership Program Story” incorporates the following:

- A headline
- A hook
- A description of the grant program
- Main partners/collaborators
- The impact on the community

See below an example of a good “Program Story” on Partnerships

Making Partnerships Pay off When Working with Veterans

Hook - The first sentence highlights the problem in a compelling way

Regional Workforce Alliance in New Haven Connecticut is making their outreach and recruitment efforts payoff when it comes to enrolling Veterans with The Department of Labor’s Skills Training Initiative Grant.

The grantee placed an emphasis from the beginning of the grant on enrolling Veterans into their training program. Regional Workforce Alliance and its partner, Eastern (CT) Workforce Investment Board, knew that it had to identify potential clients who would benefit from skills enhancement through on-the-job training (OJT) by assessing the region’s skill needs in the Engineering, IT and Advanced Manufacturing fields. The partnership aligned with their community employer needs by working closely with sector groups, including the New Haven’s IT and Manufacturers’ Associations, economic development officials, and their Chambers of Commerce.

Impact on the Community - They shared how their program is impacting the community

As a result of all these efforts, 50 Veterans were enrolled in their training program and will be working with employers through their on-the job training (OJT).

To find more about how you can help put Veterans back to work call Ron Howard, Executive Director at 222-222-2222 or visit the project on the web at: www.projectbacktowork.org

Headline - Title is designed to capture the attention of the reader

Grant Program and Main Partners/Collaborators - Describes the program/activity that was implemented. The project’s partners and the purpose of the project are clearly

Contact Information