**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Telling Your Story: Branding Your Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant (YARG) Program**

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JONATHAN VEHLOW: Hi. Welcome to "Telling Your Story: Branding your Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant Program."

So without further ado, I'd like to kick things off to our moderator today, Shelia Lewis, grant program co-lead, Office of Apprenticeship, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, co-managed with Division of Youth Services. Sheila, take it away.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you, Jon, and good afternoon or good morning to some of you. Thank you very much for joining us on our event today.

Jon, let's take it back to the poll question and give a few people a chance to participate. I can see that there are about 18 people who've joined us today, and only 7 of you have participated in the poll. So I'd like to see a little more participation. It's anonymous. We don't know who you are.

So far it looks like most of you are pros. We have a few novices, and it's good to see that everyone knows what – that they have to tell a story. So, hopefully, by the end of today's event, our novices will feel more comfortable and our pros will certainly learn more information. Thank you, Jon.

So I just want to remind everyone today that there are two resources in our file share window at the bottom. Jon, is moving it for you, and also you can download the presentation.

Also, want to remind you, just like Jon just told you, please, if you have any questions, if you have any comments, put them in the welcome chat, and we will try to get to those before the end of today's event.

So will we be talking about today? We're going to discuss the importance of telling your story, and then we're also going to share the components of a good grit – of a good program and a participant story.

We will identify accomplishments that resonate emotionally with the reader, and we'll outline some key marketing steps and provide examples of success stories. And then, finally, we'll end up with – we'll share branding resources and we'll have a question-and-answer session as well.

So let me move forward and introduce today's speakers. First, we have Susan Shorters. She's the president and CEO of High Impact Partners. And then you'll hear from Damon Jones, who's a content manager with Performance Excellence Partners. And, finally, Kimberly Hauge. She is a program analyst with the Office of Apprenticeship at the Department of Labor. So I'll hand it off now to Susan. Susan?

SUSAN SHORTERS: Great. Thank you very much, Sheila. As Sheila said, I am Susan Shorters. I am president and CEO of High Impact Partners or HIP. We've been around since 2009 providing coaching and training and technical assistance to federal grantees. So we're very delighted to be here today.

And in case you didn't know, High Impact Partners is actually our training – our parent name. Parent company is Telling Your Story, LLC. So as you can see, impact and story are in our name literally and deliberately. So it really is a pleasure and a blessing for me to join my fellow presenters today and speak to you about a topic that I am very passionate about, which is storytelling.

Honestly, ever since I was 10 gathering my neighborhood friends in my parents' basement to record and create stories and that recording was on a cassette tape recorder – I know I'm dating myself and, quite honestly, I'm glad the audio is not on so I can't hear the laughter that you all are probably doing right now. But yes. A cassette tape recorder. But ever since then, I've really loved stories and the power they have to make us feel and help us to know and inspire us to do.

So telling stories and telling your story in particular is very important. So let's look at why it's important to tell your story.

So as I said, the story about me being 10 years old using the tape recorder is my story, and no one can tell that story like me. And just like for you, no one can tell your story. You have the participants, and you know the participants. You know your challenges, and you know your successes. So you have all the particulars, you have the passion, and you know the purpose to tell your story.

So stories also are important because they have the power to do all of these things here to market your program, and as we'll learn in just a few slides that stats and data are critical, but you're really trying to market your program and nothing brings that to life like an effective story.

Telling your story will market and inform your participants and potential participants, parents, patrons, partners, and even the public. The general public will learn about your program through your story. And not only does your story have the power to market and inform, but also to inspire and to impact people's lives as well as to insight action. So there's a power in your story, and it's important that you tell it.

So we just looked at the macro of why it's important to tell your story. Those are the macro intuitive reasons, but let's drill down a bit.

Dan Pink, who is the author of "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates You," says stories are easier to remember because they are how we remember. Why is that? Well, there are many reasons, quite honestly, but let me touch on the nine that are listed here.

They convey purpose, certainly provide information, as well as create value and generate investment. They also inspire action and change, facilitate sustainability, and very importantly, they connect people to your program as well as to each other.

And something that sometimes is often overlooked, number eight, they promote institutional knowledge. So the story that you capture or stories that you capture and tell will leave a legacy and be able to create that institutional information and knowledge that is very needed in a successful program. And just like Dan Pink said, our brains are hard wired to process and store information in the form of story.

So those are nine reasons. But actually, there's a tenth reason, and that's the danger of not telling your story. So the youth you didn't impact, the person you didn't inspire, the funding you didn't receive, the career pathway that didn't happen, and even the employer who has apprenticeships and jobs but didn't partner with you because they didn't know because you didn't tell your story. So it's very important to tell it

Since you don't want number 10 to happen and not tell your story and have that danger, and you decide to commit to telling your story. Let's look at what makes stories effective. There's actually a science behind it.

Psychologist Jennifer Aaker said that, "When data and stories are used together, they resonate with audiences intellectually as well as emotionally for lasting effect. You need to persuade" – we all need to persuade the rational brain, but also resonate with the emotional brain.

So simply put, effective stories are a combination of information and inspiration. So whether you have your stories on social media, in a newsletter, on your website, in a book, or even on screen, effective stories have several component. So narrative, data, and visual.

Those are the components, and it's what I like to call Ation Nation. So it's narration, information, and visualization. And when you combine these, they not only tell your story, but the intersection here, the intersection that you see in between these actually facilitate a response and inspire action and change. And so let's see how that happens.

So here the thing to remember is the best story and the goal of telling your story, to strike a balance, strike the right balance between information and emotion. Now, how does that happen? So here – put it over there. OK.

So narratives and visuals facilitate engagement. So usually just a few words, many pictures. Maybe it's an infographic or chart, but it draws the audience in and grabs their attention.

Narratives and data together served to explain. So here you let the audience know what's important. You give them the detailed background, the history, the purpose, debate, et cetera. It's really information and used to really inform and explain.

With visuals and data, you can tell your story in a way that it enlightens, and here the audience has the details and the picture to go along with the details so they can now have a better understanding and a better picture of what the information is really saying. So it's their AHA moment. Having those visuals as well as the data gives them that aha moment.

And, finally, when you put all the elements together, narrative, visual, and data, that's what sparks change. Here the audience has the context, the details, the stats, and the picture to help them visualize what your program is all about. And this combination with all of the elements really generates the change that you want to see and is the reason why you're telling your story.

So, now, what kinds of stories can you tell? The short answer, honestly, is many. When you tell your YARG story, generally speaking, it'll be a program story or a participant story. So let's start with program stories.

So what makes an effective program story? Well, I'm glad you asked. To maximize effectiveness, your program story should include these elements, a headline to grab the attention of the audience, a hook to draw them in, describe or description of your grant program, the main partners or collaborators, and also the goal of the program and how you achieve the goals would have been the results and the all-important impact. How did it impact the community and, of course, the community is varied, your participants and the – could be the region or the economy, certainly the workforce.

So, really, in other words, all of these elements that are here are narrative and data. And then when you add in visual with the requisite release form, of course, if there are pictures of people, you'll have all the elements to evoke change and action, as we learned in the previous slide.

So for a participant story, now that we've talked about your program story, to be effective, a good and strong participant story needs to include these elements to immerse your audience in the story and to tell the personal story or a personal story of your participant, to bring it to light. You're bringing your participant to light. You're bringing the story to light, and then a positive takeaway. What happened that really changed your participant's life? And then, of course, include inspiration – and inspiration.

So, again, we have narrative, data, and probably a visual, a picture of your participant or a positive takeaway, even a before-and-after picture.

So an effective participant story really not only demonstrates change when we have these elements in it and it not only demonstrates the change in the life of a participant, it also inspires change in others. So your audience reads it, gets it, understands it, feels it even, and then does something about it.

So, now, when you tell your story, it really impacts the full person, when you do it well, when you do it successfully. This visual symbolizes the anatomy of a successful story.

So the head. The story stays on your mind. It stays in your mind. It's memorable. A good and successful story, one that's done effectively, impacts the heart. It causes us to feel something. And I'm sorry. I have it – there we are – there's the heart over there. Sorry. It's not a real human body. So I have to look at my colors there. But the heart. It really causes us to feel something and inspires us.

And then we have the gut. The gut's [inaudible] and it really tells us what's going on, whether to believe something or not, and just gives us a sense of it. So really successful, effective story give us a sense of meaning and purpose and value.

And then, finally, hands and feet symbolize action because it's what we use to do. So an effective story helps us to do something. It inspires change and action, and what action could that be?

Well, could it be that your story helps a 16-year-old decide to enroll in your program because they suddenly see a path that opens up for them for a career? Or maybe it's a parent who signs and submits the consent form and tells other parents about you and your program. It could be an employer that decides to partner with you to really build a pipeline of youth apprentices. A funder gives you money or in-kind donation. Your program could get sustained. A youth gets trained, gets a certification, has a future.

So lives are changed. Communities are changed. The workforce is changed really all by your story. Your story. So tell it. Tell your story. There's stories all around you. I encourage you to tell it. It's important. And we know that you will do a great job at it.

So with that, I'd like to turn it over to Damon Jones, who will present on branding and marketing to reach your target audience when you tell your story. And I want to thank you. I thank you very much for this opportunity to share with you today. And, now, over to you, Damon.

DAMON JONES: Thank you, Susan, for the introduction and for that great content.

I hope everyone as well. My name is Damon Jones, and I am the content development manager for Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grants. And I'm really excited to be here today to discuss strategies for effectively marketing your YARG program.

Our time today is limited. So for the purposes of our discussion, I condensed the marketing process, the process of telling your story, into three steps. Within those three steps, we will cover, what is your brand or your unique selling proposition, who is your target audience or AVATAR, how to effectively communicate and build relationships with that target audience.

"Marketing allows consumers to become aware, build an opinion, make an informed decision, and at times, maintain a long-term connection with a specific brand. Companies cannot control what a consumer thinks about its brand, but it can use a variety of tools and messages to influence a consumer to take action." And Susan spoke about taking action in her presentation.

It's so important that we tell our story. The end result is our target audience is doing something impactful. And that is succinctly what we'll cover today, how to tell your story in a way that engenders connection in the target audience and leads them to taking action.

That action could be an apprentice signing up for your program, or it could be an employer partner who signs an MOU to work along with you to build the program. And when – did anyone else think retention when they saw that part of the quote that said, maintain a long-term connection? Well, if you did think that, then you are on the right track because effectively marketing, effectively telling your story is a component of retention, and hopefully that will be clearer as we continue along.

Now that we've covered what marketing is, what is it for? The goal of marketing is to create a strong, lasting partnership or relationship. We also call that brand loyalty. It's not so much about selling your program, but it's about relating to the target audience. Who you need to establish a partnership with may vary, but the premise behind the need to create a connection is the same.

So, for example, you may want to establish a connection or partnership with a subgrantee who is going to actually implement your apprenticeship program. It could be an employer partner who's going to help you more effectively create career pathways. It could, of course, be a program participant, the apprentice themselves.

It could be a community leader in the form of an influencer or brand ambassador that helps you to tell your story and advocates for your program to niche markets that you otherwise wouldn't have access to. Or it could be an industry partner, like a supportive service provider or education provider who, again, is helping you to have to create this really robust framework for your program.

Now, the tools and platforms you use to tell your story are determined by what value you aim to convey and who you are conveying that value to.

So as I mentioned, I compartmentalized marketing into a three-step process. Step one is brand awareness, and this sense of brand awareness is self-awareness. It's becoming aware of your brand, its uniqueness, its value. What does your organization or program do that's impactful and unique and special?

Step two. The target audience, clearly and precisely identifying your ideal customer or customers. For example, youth aged 18 to 24 isn't enough of a profile to effectively market to a target customer. We need to know much more about the audience, and we'll talk about that next.

Step three. Marketing. Marketing is the process of engaging. It's the actual methods, the platforms, and the tools used to communicate value and, again, cause someone to take action.

OK. Step one, building the brand. What is branding? Branding is identifying attributes in order to create an emotional and/or psychological response in the target audience that hopefully leads to sustained connection and brand loyalty.

So with respect to this definition, I really want you to hone in on attributes, because we're going to focus on not only the attributes that you bring to the table as a program but also the attributes of your target audience and how those two things merge for an effective story.

OK. So take a look at these logos that just appeared on the screen. Do any of them invoke a feeling, an emotion, a thought, a memory, a warm fuzzy? If so, that's that psychological impact that I was speaking of and Susan also spoke of. That demonstrates the effectiveness of some of these brands in connecting with you as the target audience.

So, myself, when I look at say, for instance, those interlocking circles for the Olympics, I think unity. I think competition. I think victory. When I see the Disney logo, it kind of flashes me back to a child. We all have a favorite Disney movie or Disney character. And Disney does a really great job about communicating their brand in a way that makes us feel like kids again, takes us to this whimsical place will be forget all our concern.

And then I put Martha Stewart up here because I wanted to emphasize that brands can be people just as much as companies, and the human component of branding is absolutely essential.

So what I really want to bring to the floor is, who are the people in your organization that demonstrate your brand with their work ethic, their commitment, and their passion? Are those individuals being highlighted in your marketing efforts, in your stories? Should they be?

Now, it doesn't have to necessarily be Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jones's name actually in the communication. But who that individual is effectively is your brand. It is the value or the attributes that you bring to the table.

And when we talk to young people who have participated in apprenticeships in other workforce development programs and we ask them, what caused you to join them or what kept you engaged, I would say seven to eight times out of ten, that young person points to an actual individual in the program, maybe the first person that they encountered or a group of mentors that kept them supported through the process.

So I just want to make sure to emphasize that human component and how important it is.

OK. So at the core of branding is identifying your program or organization's key attributes and then sharing that value to invoke a response from the target audience that results in action. You can perform what's called or what I call an audit of value to identify the key attributes in your brand or program. Think of it as an internal asset map of what makes your organization awesome and unique, memorable.

These are attributes that make your brand stand out from the crowd and capture attention. Together, all of these attributes of your brand, the people, the resources, the successes, are your unique selling proposition. This is a value that only your brand can provide to the marketplace. It's value that only your brand can provide to the target customer.

If the intersection of what you do well, what your customers want, and what your competitors either don't do or don't do well, that's the sweet spot. Your unique selling proposition is that sweet spot where literally no one can compete with you because you carved out this special place in the market. It's absolutely essential to ensure that your unique selling proposition, your value is communicated clearly to the audience.

When conducting an audit of value, here are some organizational areas that you might consider highlighting. Number one, your staff, your leadership. Who are the people that are making your program awesome? Who are the leaders within your program who are setting the framework or the infrastructure for an awesome program? You might want to ensure to highlight those folks.

Your track record. What is your history of making impact in the community or in people's lives? Put that to the floor. Do a little bit of humble bragging. It's okay to let folks know that you have impacted others that look like them who are experiencing the same challenges as them. That helps with the connection. It helps to break down barriers to relationship.

The culture. What kind of a culture do you have at your organization or program that would make folks want to be a part of it? We've all had experience maybe with an athletic team or with a job where the culture was just so amazing that we wanted to show up. We wanted to be there every day. And you want to highlight the aspects of your program that makes someone want to be there.

You may have created a unique solution to a problem, and so you want to share that, if so, because that problem might remove a barrier for someone in your audience.

Your physical location, which could actually remove a barrier in and of itself. Your physical location might make it easy for apprentices to get to you and to your program, or might make it easier for an employer partners to come by and have an in-person meeting and talk about partnership.

And then, lastly, physical resources, and we talked about human resources, such as internet, computer access, supportive services, all of these things so critical to supporting our apprentices.

These are the details that make you unique and appealing, and that's what you want to be intentional about communicating to your audience. In the program world, these assets are often connected with the removal of a barrier to participation.

So, again, as I was saying before, whether your building is located in an area where an apprentice can get to them quickly or maybe you're remote but you purchased a van that allows for young people to get to your program, in either case you have created a solution to a pain point you know they have.

When you convey these assets to your target audience, you answer on a conscious and/or subconscious level the question that is important to 99.9 percent of people. What's in it for me? And I don't say this in a negative way, but human nature is to wonder how something will benefit me. Would it aid me in surviving? Will it aid me in thriving? We're all wired this way.

So by creating a targeted storytelling campaign, you are actually reaching and influencing people at a genetic level, a subatomic subconscious level, which is very powerful, and that's why, traditionally, television programs are called just that, programs.

OK. So step two. Who are you communicating your unique selling proposition, your brand's value to? Who is 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.

So then that, of course, begs the question, how do I get to know someone without meeting them or actually knowing them so I can kind of have a sense of how to build a rapport with this individual and get them to take action?

The answer to that question is the AVATAR principle. The AVATAR is your ideal customer or customers or partners. Many companies, many of the brands that I showed before have multiple AVATARs. And based on what they're trying to communicate or what product or service they're selling, they'll switch up the AVATAR that they're targeting to. The AVATAR in a fictitious person with real traits, though, that you create. And the trick is that you determine the traits based on experience, based on research, based on data.

Now, once you create this AVATAR, you determine the best strategy to build a relationship with them based on their fears, their aspirations, their barriers, and how best to communicate your USP.

Now, specifically as it pertains to YARG, the target audience can vary broadly, and so depicted above are some character components that could make up your AVATAR. So I'm going to talk about this for a brief moment.

So this AVATAR is a very powerful principle that we even used in the past with my team and and as we build programs. And, essentially, what it is is you're creating a fictitious person. You are giving them attributes, and then you're using this fictitious person as a way to determine how you're going to get to know them, how you're going to relate to them, how are you going to speak to the things that are important to them?

And so I have some of those attributes of an AVATAR up here on the screen, age, their finances. One of the most powerful ones is their fears, and that's what a lot of advertising companies use to get us to act or respond by tapping into a fear that we have either by saying, hey, I know how to solve that fear, or, hey, I'm going to make that fear so big that you get even more scared and then I'm going to do what? Provide the solution.

And so when you are looking at these different attributes, I gave you a cadre because you may be looking to establish a partnership or relationship with another business, with an employer partner. And if that's the case, you're going to want to know, what's the culture of that organization? What is the mission statement or the value proposition of that organization?

You need to know these things like their industries well before you go to engage them about participating in your apprenticeship program because you want to speak to what's important to them first before getting to what you actually want. That's how you build relationships by adding value. And the way that you're clear about how to add value is by learning the person who you are communicating to.

OK. So now that we've done two very important steps, one, we've done an internal audit of value. We've looked internally at ourselves and we've said, these are all of the components that make our program special, make our program stand out from the crowd, and all of those things combined are our unique selling proposition.

Now that you know internally – you have a good idea of what value your program has, now, you identify your AVATAR or your target audience. So that step is, okay. I know what value we're going to bring. I know what this individual's pain is. I know what their aspirations are. So in the case of YARG, I know their aspiration is to get on a viable career pathway. So that begs the question, how do I communicate that in a way to a young person that will cause them to react, respond, and sign up for my program?

Now that we've done one and two, were clear on the sale, we're clear on target, we are in an informed position to determine how to effectively connect with the target audience by communicating that value.

It's what I like to call and many of you might have heard this, fully consciously competent. There's varying levels of competence. And so by doing an audit of value, you have taken yourself to conscious competence, meaning you are fully aware of how amazing you are. You are fully aware of the value you bring, and you are more in position – in a better position to communicate that value that you are aware of.

What medium, methods, and tools would you use now to communicate that USP to your target audience? OK. Know self. You know the audience. So how are you going to communicate your value? We know the what. We know the who. Now, we need to make sure that we dial in on the right method.

There are so many tools to kind of do this, to, quote, unquote, market, and these are just a few on screen. And just remember that communicating your brand, the tools you use does in some way depend on the target audience.

So social media posts happen to be phenomenal methods to target young people because that's where young people are. They're on social media. They're on TikTok. They're on Instagram. Not so much Facebook, but those two platforms are definitely youth centered.

Infographic. Now, again, if your intended audience is an employer partner, it might be best to communicate your value via infographic. Video, as Susan touched upon in her presentation, is the most powerful marketing tool because it engages the most of our modalities all at once. You have eyes which are engaged and ears which are engaged. It's the most effective, scientifically based because it captures us the most.

Events are always great because, if you can bring people into space at one time around one theme, then you can really have an impactful event. And if you know your target audience well, if you do – if you built a really clear AVATAR, then you'll be able to create a theme around your event that will attract more of your target audience.

And then, lastly, I have up here apprenticeship.gov which has a ton of really great resources. And Kimberly Hauge will talk about those a little bit more in the presentation following this one.

So just to wrap up and bring this all together, I wanted to highlight AMI Kids and the work that they're doing to effectively communicate their brand, their story, their USP to their AVATAR. And I think that this post on Instagram is a great example of that.

So we see here that AMI Kids has done something really well. They have clearly identified what their unique selling proposition is. They are positive. They are caring. And you can see highlighted in the description that they have a mentoring program which demonstrates that they care. They create real solutions, and as you'll see in the description that these two gentlemen pictured are currently employed, which is the ultimate goal of what we're doing, to get young people on a career path, to get them employed.

AMI provides stackable – opportunities for young people to get stackable credentials, which is, as we all know, is an essential component to putting someone on a viable career pathway. And then, lastly, successful outcomes. These two gentlemen happen to be employees of the month.

So AMI, right there you can see components of their unique selling proposition that they bring to the table, and they communicated that effectively in their post.

Second, step two. The target audience. We can see just based on the picture, we can get a really good idea who AMI's target audience is. They are young people, perhaps minority youth. And you can also see in the hashtags just below the description they have #AtRiskYouth.

So even in this brief post, they've been clear using visuals and using hashtags about who their target is. And I would imagine that the team at AMI sat down and really deliberated about how to effectively communicate and deliver their value proposition.

And then, lastly, now they know, number one, the brand and, number two, the target audience, they made a decision that social media and specifically Instagram would be the best medium and method and tool to share this information and get these young people engaged so that they'll take action.

So I think that, hopefully, this post really brings everything together. I thought this was an amazing post, and when you get the PowerPoint presentation, I invite you to click on that video link because that is an amazing video also produced by AMI where they are doing a great job of communicating their unique selling proposition to the AVATAR.

So just to recap really quick, three steps for marketing your YARG program for establishing partnerships with an employer partner is, number one, getting clear on your brand, your unique selling proposition, the value that you provide to your target audience.

Number two, a clear and concise and precise description and AVATAR of who your target audience is because the better you know that individual, the better position you are to build relationship, just like in real life.

And then step three, now that we're clear on the brand, we're clear on the target, it brings it all together and makes it very obvious what the best method would be to target and communicate to that target audience, that AVATAR.

So I thank you for your time today. Again, my name is Damon Jones, content development manager for YARG. And I will pass it over to Kimberly Hauge who will talk about the Department of Labor's investment at apprenticeship.gov.

KIMBERLY HAUGE: Thank you so much, Damon. Appreciate it. I thought it was a really interesting slide and really good case study at the end. I'm actually also going to be sharing a case study. It's the national marketing case study.

We at the Office of Apprenticeship ran a national marketing campaigns past fall. I know some of my colleagues presented on it to the YARG group, but now I want to just share and do a quick recap on how it went, what the results were, and how you can get involved. I will also share some updates to our websites that can help you in your marketing efforts.

So happy to be here, and happy to answer any questions afterwards. And I'll leave my contact information in the chat box.

But first of all, I just wanted to say that these are the circumstances under which we were conducting our marketing efforts. I think that's really important to kind of frame any of the stories that you also tell going forward right now during COVID. It's just been a very unprecedented and challenging year. Clearly, the pandemic has left many Americans without a job or predictable income, and it's exposed industries already in high need for skilled workers.

And so we at the Department of Labor believe in the power of apprenticeship to help employers train workers for careers in high demand efficiently and to allow workers to pursue a new job and career swiftly and without sacrificing a paycheck. And so for these reasons, we were pleased to have been able to launch a campaign and help raise awareness for this workforce solution, perhaps when America needed it the most.

So this presentation is going to go briefly over the marketing campaign, which we called your plan of action, which also launched the brand, which is Discover Apprenticeship, and is to note they are both registered apprenticeship focused and the result of two years of hard work, including the in-depth research which the other panelists spoke about, the necessity before developing your campaign, insight-based strategy, career development, and campaign implementation.

And just to note, I cannot get credit for any of that. I joined DOL in the fall. So – but we had a really great team that was responsible for this.

So quickly, so I said that there is a campaign and a brand. So the brand was Discover Apprenticeship. It was new this past fall. Launched during the campaign, and it had two full kind of audience there. So it was both for job creators to learn more about apprenticeship, taking – and really, as Damon was talking about, having actionable steps. We really wanted to be an actionable brand for job creators to learn more about apprenticeship and take steps towards training the employees they need for the jobs of today in the future.

But it also is targeted towards job seekers to help them realize that apprenticeship can provide a fast track to realizing their career goals, urging them to take steps toward their future right now.

And then the plan of action is the time limited advertising campaign that was launched in September, ran. We had limited resources as well. But we leveraged them to target audiences in 21 states, which for multiple reasons had the most – we knew would have the most – the campaign would have the most impact in those states and across multiple platforms, such as social media and streaming television services.

So the call to action really was them to – the first one was to go to the website. So many of you – we gave examples in the fall of the campaign ads, video, radio, visuals that were sent out through these different platforms. And they're short, snappy; right? They're like, if there are videos, just about a minute long. Very quick. And you can't give – and if it's just a visual, it's usually just a phrase.

And so you can't give a whole lot of information in that, but the drive was to push people towards our website apprenticeship.gov where they can learn so much more, have so many more resources and tools on how to find your apprenticeship or how to start up a program.

And a secondary call to action was to actually visit – contact a person, a representative for more details, if they don't want to go to the website. So both of those were kind of our goals.

And so knowing – well, let's back up. This is just how we went about that. So we worked with a contractor to do the primary research. We found the right audiences, developed those AVATARs and decided who is it that we're trying to target, which I kind of described that already. And then we had an objective to show these ambitious individuals how apprenticeship can really answer their challenges and just help them get to where they're going with a fast track toward achieving their dreams.

And so talk about results now. So we knew what we were going to try to measure. A lot of it was around driving people towards the website. So we could do – we could look at how many people went on the website between around September 18th when it launched to October 13th.

And we were able to see that this campaign generated a new total of 119 million –over 119 million impressions and over 450,000 clicks to the website. And even beyond that, we saw that over 139,000 people actually used our apprenticeship finder search, which was very promising.

So that was a bit about the marketing campaign results, and here's the Discover Apprenticeship results. We – as part of trying to develop a brand for ourselves, we put the – we worked with a contractor who helped us put together this logo. Again, very clean lines, bold. This is a slate color on the left.

This is already transitioning now into some of the resources we are able to share, hopefully that the YARG grantees will also leverage and use. You should have already seen this. It's already – it's all over our website as well. The primary color is slate. It looks good on a white background – light color background, but we also have a secondary color palette on the right here. Those all are approved colors.

And I would just say we – I'll share the brand guideline information as well. But we have – we're – as we put out this logo and this brand, we want to be very careful of how it's used so that it can continue to be a very recognizable and high-quality brand. So that's just some background for why we just – you can't have anybody alter the logo at all. And I think the same would go for you as you're developing your logo.

It brought to mind, as I was thinking about this, that when I was younger, I remember hearing about Coca-Cola sending out representatives around the world to inspect their red logo on shops and on the stores and on products and just make sure it's the exact right shade. And it kind of reminds me of that.

So I think it's a lot harder to do that maybe now. It's just how many places the logo is going to be online, it's going to be impossible to follow that up everywhere. But we do want to try our best to just make sure that it is being used the same way consistently. And so here are some more resources that we can share with you beyond – that also resulted from the campaign but they're also ongoing right now through the spring.

So we have – apprenticeship.gov has a resource hub, and on it we are constantly looking out into the world to find out what resources are available to help apprenticeship seekers, apprenticeship program creators. And so we've been adding some fact sheets that we've been designing. These are all going on there or already on there. Check them out.

We also want to make them available for you to add your own brand logo and contact information on the back and use it for your own purposes. The ones that are asterisks are available to do that right now, and they should all be like that. But you can contact me and I can send you the customizable version directly, if that would be of help.

I'm going to kind of breeze through the rest so we can wrap up. But just letting you know, please do check out our apprenticeship.gov regularly. We have a lot of new content. I mentioned resource hub. Virtual apprenticeship resources, especially during COVID, this is going to be really helpful, I think, as programs are transitioning to online. Federal agency apprenticeship programs. Some exciting news about just all the different programs that are available through government and then others just being updated.

I did mention the brand guidelines. Just want to point out here that we have – if you do use the logo, I just ask that you email me and and explain your contact information and the exact purposes for which you're using it. I keep track of that, and I will send you an exchange the logo and the brand guidelines PDF that just gives you more information on how you can use it.

And I'm just going to leave you here with some dos and don'ts for the brand. Just in general, only for registered apprenticeship and for informational materials like presentation, fact sheets, webinars, and let us know if you have any questions. Basically, don't use it on anything that you might be giving away that could be repurposed for another use or if you're not sure about whether it's being used properly.

So I'm going to turn back over to Shelia and to close us up.

SHELIA LEWIS: Thank you, Kimberly, and also thanks to Susan and Damon. Great job and lots of great information.

So now, we're going to talk a little bit about additional resources, two of which are webinars. Under the left-hand column, the first one is Getting Started with Social Media: part one and Getting Started with Social Media: part two. You see the hyperlink there to both of those webinars. And there are three written resources on the right-hand column, Make Your Social Media Sing, Social Media Tips and Tricks, Part One and Part Two.

So moving on, some upcoming events that we have for YARG is the YARG April peer-to-peer on April 14th from 2:00 to 3:00 Eastern Time.

Sustaining your YARG Program webinar, that will be on May 12 from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern.

And, finally, Grant Achievements in Year One on June 16th from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern.

So I don't see any questions in the chat room, but we do have a few minutes before we end today's event. So if you have any questions, please let us know. We do have some time for a brief question-and-answer period. Or if no questions, comments.

We really appreciate you joining our event today. Again, we hope those who are experts, we hope that you've certainly gained a lot of good information, and those who you consider yourself novices, again, there's even more for you to learn and more information and resources to help move your comfort level from novice to pro.

I see there's a few people typing. So we'll give you a few minutes to get your questions in the chat room. And just a reminder, I mentioned earlier that there are resources in our file share room. Jon is moving the window now for you to see. So don't forget to download those resources. One is Branding Your YARG Program Toolkit, and the other one is a QuickStart Success Story Guide. And of course, the third resource is today's presentation.

All right. So I see we do have one question. It says, "For clarity, are you encouraging YARG grantees to utilize the Discover Apprenticeship logo, or is the preference for us to create our own logo?"

MS. HAUGE: Yeah. Thank you. I can answer that. I – we certainly encourage people to use the Discover Apprenticeship logo. I think the more we can get the brand out there, the better. Just made that clarification there that it can only be for registered apprenticeship. Can't even be for pre-apprenticeship. It's really just registered apprenticeship. So just making that note.

I don't have – I'm not giving any recommendations on whether or not to create your own logos. I leave that completely up to you. If you want to do it and you want to include both logos, I think that's perfectly reasonable, too. But yeah. But – and I can't – I'm not telling you to use the Discovery Apprenticeship logo. I'm just saying that it's out there, and we would love you to use it, if you're talking about registered apprenticeship.

MS. LEWIS: All right. Thank you, Kimberly, for that explanation. That clarifies that question.

And, Emily, thank you very much for asking questions. We appreciate that.

Any others? I see someone typing now, but I will say that that must be a good indication that you get a lot of good information from today's event, if there's not a whole lot of questions.

MS. SHORTERS: I can take that question from Scott.

MS. LEWIS: Sure.

MS. HAUGE: And hi, Scott. Good to hear from you. We have no plans to expand the Discover Apprenticeship campaign, as you're aware. With the change of administration, they are certainly – they will probably consider another marketing campaign at some point. But there's been no – no – it's not a discussion point right now that I'm aware of.

And so – and especially since it was focused on registered apprenticeship, and that is what the administration is certainly pursuing more of right now, there's been no challenge to using the Discover Apprenticeship logo. In fact, it's just been used even more than before. So I don't foresee a change in that anytime soon. But that's not to say that it couldn't happen.

Additional content, sure. We're going to be constantly adding more content. Like I said, the fact sheets, I'm working on several right now, and I would love to hear from any of you. If you hear of a topic that you would like to have a fact sheet about, I mean, I would love that. So just let us know what kind of content you need.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you, Kimberly, for that question. I mean, that response. I appreciate it.

So we're running 3:00. Again, thank you, everyone, for your participation. Thank you for your time and joining us in today's event, and to our three presenters, thank you very much for a job well done. You'll see on the presentation that there's contact information for each of our three presenters.

So I think that's about it. I want to turn it back over to Jon, and, again, thank you very much for attending today's event. Jon?

(END)