

**Cincinnati Museum Center Welcome the New Year Membership Campaign**

Public Relations Plan Book

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## **Executive Summary**

The Cincinnati Museum Center Welcome the New Year (2024) Membership Campaign will encompass multiple goals in the effort to place the CMC in a new public light. When objectives for both key publics in the campaign are met, a symbiotic cohesion will be created which will propel the overall campaign forward. Campaign goals are expected to be surpassed as enthusiasm for the new year builds.

Critical components of the campaign are a CMC interactive booth that will be hosted at a holiday event in downtown Cincinnati on Dec. 22, 2023, and a local TV commercial. These are both predicted to generate earned media attention, particularly the interactive booth. Both the commercial and booth will be used to promote the discounts on 2024 CMC Membership through the end of January. A cost-benefit analysis has proven the financial investment of these two tactics to be beneficial.

The New Year Campaign also includes social media goals, newsletter promotion, website landing page creation, brochure distribution, and guest editorial. Gifts to both Board Members and new and returning CMC members will also be given out as a personal ‘thank you’.

A catered private meeting will be hosted for Board of Trustee Members only and will encourage new conversation and ideas. The meeting will take place mid-campaign and CEO spokesperson, Elizabeth Pierce, will promote the new membership program and explain how the Board of Trustees can deeply benefit from relationship building. This will excite Board

Members of the work of the CMC, increase their support and their likelihood to share and promote the CMC on their own. This benefits the CMC, bringing new partnerships and opportunities to the city. It also spreads awareness of the CMC Membership, creating a more supporting base of customers and community that penetrates the city of Cincinnati. With additional support and funds from increased membership purchases, the CMC can give more in their partnerships, have greater financial freedom, and build more relationships in the community that will, in turn, support the Board of Trustees.

Monitoring by survey will occur throughout the campaign, and necessary changes will be implemented. When the campaign is concluded, expect to have at least 50% of current CMC Members return, as well as a record-breaking amount of first time CMC Members.

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## **Situational Analysis**

**Issue:** To increase CMC membership purchases for the year 2024. To connect the CMC Board of Trustees deeper with the general public and those that visit the museum.

### **Cincinnati Museum Center Audit:**

*Internal Environment:* The Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC) is a public, nonprofit multi-museum organization. The museum exists in the old Union Terminal, a historic location and retired train station in the heart of Cincinnati. Their mission is to inspire people of all ages to learn more about the world through regional history, science, and other educational experiences. It is the largest cultural institution in Cincinnati and its exhibits are supported by a research facility. The museum has the financial means to create many educational programs, camps, lectures, tours, and events for the public. Their collection also holds over 1.8 million artifacts. The CMC penetrates the market and makes a name for themselves through their unique and beautiful location and their positive work in the community, especially for youth. This is what the CMC structures themselves around, encouraging young people to learn about the past, present, and future through their programs. They also rent out their location for private events like weddings or galas.

There are 188 employees at the Cincinnati Museum Center. This number does not include non-managerial positions such as cashier, custodians, ticket-booth workers, tour guides, etc. Elizabeth Pierce is the President and CEO. There is also a President of Museum Services and a Chief of Staff. Roles are divided carefully and defined particularly for the CMC to run properly. There is a marketing and communications team that creates a newsroom on the website among other outreach activities.

*External Environment:* The CMC has countless supporters from generous donors to local and national organizations who partner with the museum. The direct competitors of the CMC are The Cincinnati Art Museum, the American Sign Museum, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, the Taft Museum of Art, and the Contemporary Art Museum. Indirect competitors are smaller museums in the city and other entertainment options such as Kings Island Amusement Park, the Newport Aquarium, the Cincinnati Zoo, etc.

There are not many opponents to the CMC, as their mission and purpose is widely accepted and supported in the community. However, the CMC has faced issues in the past with people speaking out claiming that the museum shouldn't be displaying monuments and artifacts rooted in racism. The CMC has spoken out that the purpose is to educate on the history of racism in our country, not pretend it never happened. These claims have been infrequent and small, however, as many realize that the purpose is not to perpetuate racism or racist attitudes. These opposers do pose a threat to the CMC, however, as they risk tainting their reputation.

External factors that could create obstacles for the CMC could be weather, people don't want to be inside a museum on beautiful sunny days. There is also the risk of general economic downfall, which means people have less money to spend on memberships or tickets.

*Public Perception of Organization:* The CMC receives more than 1.4 million visitors each year. They have a well-known presence in the Cincinnati area and beyond. This means that their visibility is high, for both locals and tourists. The CMC has a positive reputation, people generally enjoy their experience visiting the museum. They have almost all 4- and 5-star reviews on Google and Trip Advisor. People love that the museum is kid friendly. They also state that the exhibits are modern, innovative, and "more than just a collection of artifacts", this response proves that the CMC is living up to their mission statement and educating the public about the world in unique ways. CMC has received the National Medal for Museum and Library Service in 2009 which recognizes amazing contributions to communities. It is the nation's highest honor for museums and libraries. They also received accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.

**Publics:** After consideration, two key publics for Cincinnati Museum Center are:

- CMC Members:

*Nature/Type:* CMC members are an aware public. They have recognized the work that CMC does, and they have realized the benefit they can receive from becoming a member. However, not all CMC members actively donate, spread positive feedback, or actively support the mission of CMC. Their membership fee does help the museum despite them not being active publics.

*Wants:* Members want to receive benefits that they would not otherwise get without the cost of membership. This means special privileges, discounts, and extra opportunities. It also needs to make financial sense to potential buyers.

*Interests:* Because the museum offers a wide variety of exhibits and features, the interests among members vary according to their personality, age, and various

other factors. Generally, they are interested in the information the museum has to offer, and the interactive exhibits they can see. They may be pursuing a career in a museum themselves and want to be involved in some way.

*Needs:* They need to be stimulated mentally and emotionally through exhibits. They need to be challenged and they want to learn new information. Children need to be entertained and taught new things.

*Expectations:* Parents paying for membership expect their children to have positive experiences. People want to leave the museum feeling satisfied with their visit.

*Demographics:* CMC members are largely made up of families with young children and are in the middle to upper financial class.

*Readability Level:* There is a very high readability level among CMC members.

*Personality Preferences:* Intellectual, quiet, creative, curious, attentive, and engaged with history and science.

*Benefit Statement:* The CMC offers its members exclusive opportunities, discounts, and special access to the invigorating and highly interactive exhibits that are updated regularly.

- CMC Board of Trustees:

*Nature/Type:* This is an active public and is already acting on a shared issue of supporting the museum, sustaining funding, and increasing awareness. It is not a single-issue public, as the board gets together to coordinate their actions and define roles and responsibilities to divide work.

*Wants:* Board members want to support the CMC while boosting their own resume and network in the city. They want to maintain relationships with their own key publics, as each board member is uniquely influential.

*Interests:* They are deeply interested in the work Cincinnati is doing for the betterment of society. They are also interested in science, history, the arts, technology, and more. They care about the CMC and want to help it thrive.

*Needs:* Board members need to feel heard, validated, and receive what they need from the CMC in return for their work and support.

*Expectations:* The Board of Trustees expects to have positive relationships with the CMC and the other board members. They expect conversations to be civil, agreements to be made, and plans to be followed through on. There has to be an appropriate division of power and dynamic that is healthy for a board.

*Demographics:* Board members are college educated and middle aged. They are of upper-level income. They are a split division of male and female.

*Readability Level:* All CMC Board Members are literate.

*Benefit Statement:* The CMC builds authentic and personal relationships with its Board of Trustees to ensure their direct involvement with the museum's inner and outer workings.

## **Strategic recommendations**

### *Goals*

- Goal Statement (relationship-management): Maintain favorable relationships with internal stakeholders while simultaneously promoting the appreciation of CMC among potential members.
- Goal Statement (task-oriented): Increase membership purchases among the public (to increase the number of new CMC members while ensuring that current members return yearly).

### *Objectives for CMC Members*

- Objective 1 (*awareness*): To generate increased attention about CMC membership benefits, discounted rates, and other special privileges.
- Objective 2 (*acceptance*): To build an emotional interest in the advantages of a CMC membership.

- Objective 3 (*action*): To increase purchases of CMC memberships. This will be achieved if 5,000 new members are signed up by 2024, and if over half of current members renew their membership.

*CMC Board of Trustees Objectives:*

- Objective 1 (*awareness*): To make the Board of Trustees aware of their ability to build relationships with stakeholders and the public as opinion leaders. To create awareness of the impact they have on the success of the CMC Membership program.
- Objective 2 (*acceptance*): To generate enthusiasm in Board Members of promoting the CMC Membership Program and sharing the CMC's work among their peers and the public.
- Objective 3 (*action*): To increase Board Member attendance at meetings by having no absences of any members. It will also be measured by the increase of crucial relationship building, further broadening the network of key resources for the CMC who are also likely to promote CMC Membership to the public.

Spokespeople: The CEO, Elizabeth Pierce, will present the information to the Board of Trustees by pre-written speech. This will help encourage knowledge and foster relationship-building opportunities for CMC Board Members. The CEO is a trusted and known source for Board Members, meaning she holds validity in the audience.

For the CMC prospective members, a positive spokesperson would be Kenneth B. Robinson, as he has widespread support and is well known in the city. A guest editorial from him would likely be received well. He is a CMC Board of Trustees Member as well as the Chair of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center Board of Directors.

Key messages:

- The CMC is a beneficial organization to the entire city of Cincinnati.
- The CMC is a family friendly environment where learning can take place.
- The CMC creates symbiotic relationships between its Board of Trustees, CMC Members, and other organizations in the city of Cincinnati.

The Cincinnati Museum Center will use the following strategies:

Proactive Strategies:

1. Further enhance alliances with Board of Trustees through various relationship-building tactics. Sharing information about CMC Membership program and encouraging board members to promote the Membership program to their followers.
2. Host a private event with the Board of Trustees to educate them on CMC Membership.
3. Get press coverage for various works the CMC does in the city and advertise new exhibits. Use these opportunities to promote the CMC Membership program and its advantages.

Reactive Strategy:

Because CMC has a very positive reputation, the likelihood of needing a reactive strategy is low. However, some exhibits have been controversial (such as the recent “Girlhood” promotion). If negative feedback occurs, a support team will be trained to respond accordingly, and determine appropriate solutions.

## **Tactical Program**

For the implementation of strategic recommendations, according to each public.

### **CMC Potential Members:**

#### *Interpersonal*

Publicity event – The CMC will host an interactive booth at the Holiday Event on Dec. 22, 2023, in downtown Cincinnati. Alongside ice skating, hot chocolate, a parade, and more Christmas-themed activities, CMC will showcase their new exhibits. The experience will be hands on and

interactive. Participants will also learn about the 2024 Membership discounts through January at the booth. The audience that this tactic would reach would be families in Cincinnati. The advantage is that the booth would allow people to interact. To ensure that every person gets to try the booth, a large space would be purchased on the street and the booth would be heavily staffed with multiple stations. Staff will ask for emails of participants on iPads, where they can easily type them.

#### *Owned:*

Newsletter- The Newsletter will reach those subscribed to it, mostly CMC members already or those who are potential members (aware public). The advantage of this will be converting those who are subscribed to the publication already into members. There could be a direct link to the landing page where recipients could easily explore the membership benefits and purchase a membership online. There will also be a discount offered in a newsletter on membership. A catchy heading and subtitle will prevent people from overlooking the email.

Social Media- Something that the CMC doesn't already post on their social media are many videos. They could post CMC Membership promotional videos and link the entire campaign. An advantage of this is that social media can reach a broader audience, especially those in younger generations. Videos are sharable, so the awareness of Membership would spread. A disadvantage is that some of the target audience doesn't use social media.

#### *Earned*

Press Coverage- A tactic of getting press coverage on the interactive exhibit that the CMC holds at the Holiday Event downtown will be beneficial to the campaign. The CMC will use it as an opportunity to promote CMC Membership and its advantages. The audience reached would depend on the kind of press coverage. Ideally, a local news station would mention the CMC in a snippet for TV, reaching a wide audience.

Guest editorials- Guest editorials are something that CMC doesn't already do much of. It could be a good way to draw in a new audience. A guest editorial could get local conversation started about the positive works of the CMC. It would draw generalized attention to the museum.

#### *Paid*

TV commercial- A TV commercial highlighting the benefits of a CMC membership will reach a large audience. The commercial will air on local channels, like news stations or sports stations. It will run for three weeks and target people who are already interested in Cincinnati events and activities. The commercial will display how exciting the exhibits are and use emotional appeal.

Billboards- The CMC has used billboards in the past around the city for various campaigns. They are noticeable and memorable. They also target a very large audience in a subtle way. A total of six billboards will go up around the city, in increments of three and remain up for three weeks.

### **CMC Board of Trustees:**

#### *Interpersonal:*

Private Meeting- Host a private event with the Board of Trustees to educate them on CMC Membership (information exchange in the form of a meeting). The audience that this meeting would reach would be the Board of Trustees. The advantage of the meeting would be for the Board to mingle for a reason other than to discuss business, and to bond and discuss what is and isn't working with their communication. It also gives the PR team an opportunity to explain to the Board directly why their support for CMC Membership is so beneficial and how they can help the CMC obtain more members in the coming year. The disadvantage is the Board may feel they are being pitched to; others may choose not to attend since the meeting would not be mandatory. To combat this, offer classy holiday gifts to members who attend (engraved with their names). There will also be catering and an open bar at the event, dinner provided by CMC.

#### *Owned*

Survey- Open ended response surveys will evaluate how Board Members feel about their relationship to the CMC, and how they benefit from it individually. It will also help determine how likely the Board Member is to promote CMC on their social media, or to help the CMC create new partnerships in the city of Cincinnati. It will follow up on dialogue already addressed at the private meeting. It will also allow the Board Members to voice their opinions on what isn't working for them.

### **Schedule**

**Timeline: Dec.1- Feb.24**

Dec. 1- Dec. 8: Begin planning and building interactive exhibit for Dec. 22. Membership discount begins Dec. 1. Design brochure.

Dec. 9- Dec. 15: Explain to staff working the staged activity the purpose and train them on how to encourage participation, educate the audience on membership deals. Send brochure to recipients.

Dec. 16- Dec. 22: Reminder newsletter sent early in the week on staged activity event. Set up staged activity and host it on Dec. 22

Dec. 23- Dec. 29: Create and follow up with email surveys to staged activity participants.

Dec. 30- Jan. 5: Record responses from survey and interpret feedback. Host private meeting with Board of Trustees, record responses from Board member survey.

Jan. 6- Jan. 12: Design graphics for social media promotion, place an order for member gifts (swag). Order thank you gift for Board Members.

Jan. 13- Jan. 19: Hire commercial actors, write script, begin filming. Plan caterer and bartender for private Board Meeting.

Jan. 20- Jan. 26: Release commercial on air (runs for 3 weeks). Design billboard layout.

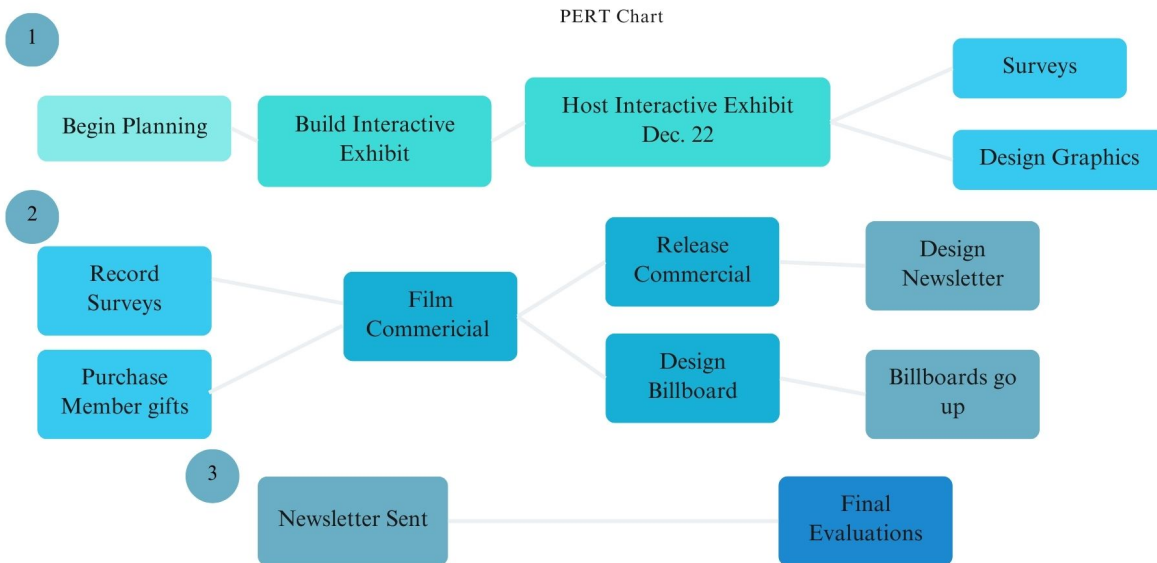
Jan. 27- Feb. 2: Three of six billboards go up downtown.

Feb. 3- Feb. 9: Remaining three billboards go up in suburbs. Design new newsletter.

Feb. 10- Feb. 16: Send February newsletter, notify of final weeks of 2024 membership purchase.

Feb. 17- Feb. 24: Conduct final evaluation, final changes.

## CMC 2024 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN



### Budget

Using cost benefit analysis and the all-you-can-afford method because of increased holiday spending in consumers. The CMC total annual budget is about 55 million dollars. Four percent of this is invested in public relations, meaning 2.2 million dollars annually. For this 3-month campaign, there is a 550,000-dollar budget.

### Material Costs:

- Interactive booth - \$100,000 (including staff and rent of space on street)
- Overseeing social media, Developing Membership Web Page- \$20,000
- Cards for Members- \$10,000
- Membership swag (shirts, keychains, etc.)- \$20,000
- Email Survey Creation Cost- \$1,000
- Brochure print- \$3,000
- Food and beverage for private Board meeting- \$3,500

- Gifts for Board Members- \$2,000
- Props for Commercial - \$2,000

Media Costs:

- Newsletter- \$2,000 (for subscription to create the emails)
- Billboards- \$30,000
- TV Commercial- \$300,000 (including actors' salary)

Administrative Costs:

- Delivery- \$5,000
- Photocopying- \$2,000

**Evaluation plan**

*The CMC will evaluate its CMC Membership initiative according to the following plan:*

Objective 1 (*awareness*): To generate increased attention about CMC membership benefits, discounted rates, and other special privileges.

- Create 2 progress reports over the 12-week period reporting the membership page visits and social media engagement based on relative media effectiveness.
- What PR action caused a change in behavior on social media?

Objective 2 (*acceptance*): To build an emotional interest in the advantages of a CMC membership.

- Measure CMC newsletter sign ups over the 12 weeks.
- Send a message recall survey to those who visited the CMC booth on Dec. 22, asking their likelihood of purchasing a membership/ their experience at the booth.
- Content analysis of news reports, the guest editorial, and outtake analysis based on engagement with these items.

Objective 3 (*action*): To increase purchases of CMC memberships. This will be achieved if 5,000 new members are signed up by 2024, and if over half of current members renew their membership.

- Measure how many people renewed their membership for 2024 by the date Feb. 24.  
Measure the number of new 2024 members using direct observation.

This evaluation report will be written and distributed to the Board of Trustees, CMC CEO, CMC administration, and PR practitioners.

***The CMC will evaluate the Board of Trustees portion of its PR program according to the following plan:***

Objective 1 (*awareness*): To make the Board of Trustees aware of their ability to build relationships with stakeholders and the public as opinion leaders. To create awareness of the impact they have on the success of the CMC Membership program.

- Monitoring communication and collaboration at Board meetings.

Objective 2 (*acceptance*): To generate enthusiasm in Board Members of promoting the CMC Membership Program and sharing the CMC's work among their peers and the public.

- Survey analysis to gain board-initiated feedback. Reviewing comments, notes from meetings, suggestions, and letters to be summarized and analyzed.

Objective 3 (*action*): To increase Board Member attendance at meetings by having no absences of any members for 12 weeks beginning Dec. 1st. It will also be measured by the increase of crucial relationship building, further broadening the network of key resources for the CMC who are also likely to promote CMC Membership to the public.

- Keep track of absences at meetings, to monitor enthusiasm and care about the mission of CMC.
- Keeping note of new relationships, broadened network of supporters, and posts and engagement made by CMC Board Members.
- Before-and-after study measuring the increase in promotion of the CMC Membership to Board Members' network compared to before the 12-week program.
- Measure conversations and positivity using influence metrics.

## **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The plans' main goals and objectives will be met with careful consideration and monitoring along the way. The schedule is tentative, and changes may be made mid-campaign. Advertising value equivalency will be avoided, and other forms of evaluation are encouraged. The campaign will follow PRSA ethical guidelines throughout.

Success will be measured by the increase of crucial relationship building, further broadening the network of key resources for the CMC who are also likely to promote CMC Membership to the public.

## **References**

[Home Page - Cincinnati Museum Center \(cincymuseum.org\)](http://cincymuseum.org)

[Members - Cincinnati Museum Center \(cincymuseum.org\)](http://cincymuseum.org)

[The Business Model of the Nonprofit Museum \(sothebysinstitute.com\)](http://sothebysinstitute.com)

Strategic Planning for Public Relations- Ronald D. Smith

[Board of Directors – National Underground Railroad Freedom Center](#)

