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TEDx 2014

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**Mayor's
Internship
Program**

Executive Summary

The mission of the TEDx Mayor's Internship team was to research the TED foundation's TEDx program and to use our research to plan a symposium aimed at inspiring Philadelphians to think innovatively about city government. The following report includes information about our purpose, our research process, and our recommended next-steps. Ultimately, our work will serve as a foundational reference for future interns in subsequent stages of planning. As the initial planning team, we have explored various research methods such as contacting official personnel, reviewing policies and procedures and utilizing strategic planning tools such as GANTT charts intended to guide the next stages of planning. We used collected data to determine the feasibility of the TEDx Program for our purposes, and to inform our pursuit of a TEDx license.

As a team, we organized ourselves into sub-groups wherein individuals focused on drafting a media strategy, brainstorming potential event logistics, and researching the intricacies of the TED and TEDx programs. The ultimate goal of our research was to organize and develop a means of showcasing municipal innovation in a publically engaging way. The TEDx foundation is a speaker series that provides a platform for innovators to talk about "ideas worth spreading". Hosting a TEDx event in Philadelphia will give innovators an opportunity to share their most exciting new ideas with the community, inspiring and energizing Philadelphians to think creatively about possible solutions to persistent problems that plague Philadelphia and other cities around the world.

Introduction

Similar to many other cities around the world, Philadelphia faces distressing problems such as crime, poverty, and homelessness and, similar to many other cities around the world, Philadelphia has struggled to resolve these problems due to a lack of resources. Funding and manpower are essential to solving these kinds of issues; however, funding and manpower are not resources that are easy to come by. While cities commonly face resource poor circumstances, they are rich in innovation and entrepreneurship. A Philadelphia TEDx conference showcasing innovation in city government can help our city discover solutions to demanding questions such as how to create affordable homes while working within a budget deficit, or discover methods to reduce homicide rates and how to maintain that reduction, or learn the best way to create jobs for those who live below the poverty line. These questions continue to plague the most impressive cities around the world, and Philadelphia can be at the forefront of finding the most efficient answers.

A TEDx event creates an opportunity to bring together innovative municipalities, creative organizations, and ambitious individuals in a forum built around community engagement and collaboration. Philadelphia local government has an opportunity to become the place for creative thinkers to connect with one another, highlighting the city's position as a modern, educated community that places great emphasis on innovation. Furthermore, TEDx events are meant to be multidisciplinary programs, an obligation that encourages a range of speakers to participate and listeners to attend. By attending this TEDx conference, policy makers, city officials and community members of all generations and lifestyles each have an opportunity to hear about innovative ways to deal with Philadelphia's most pressing issues, leaving the most motivated

members of our city better informed and inspired to address the City's biggest challenges together.

I. Purpose

The purpose of our project was to plan an event in Philadelphia that will inspire innovation in local government and foster creative problem-solving throughout the community. These innovations don't necessarily have to be current; they can be innovations that look to the near future, or even the distant future, but their focus will be on improving the reach, the efficiency, and the sustainability of local government. In order to accomplish this purpose, our group set out to accomplish three objectives: to study the rules and procedures set forth by the TEDx Program, to research and predict the logistics of planning and executing the conference, and to create a template for future interns to utilize when continuing the planning process.

II. Feasibility of Project

Much of our work reflected the preliminary stages of event planning, meaning we had to work with hypothetical situations and broad ideas for most of our research. To center our approach, we first had to decide whether or not we would be able to plan a conference while abiding by the policies and procedures set forth by the TEDx Program. It was agreed upon within the group that planning this conference with TEDx would be beneficial in many aspects. The name TED itself is very reputable and recognizable, a factor which would encourage potential speakers and attendees to participate. Furthermore, we would have the ability to use the familiar TEDx logo, and to take advantage of the preexisting TEDx media platform, which can be used by licensed conferences.

The major disadvantage of hosting a TEDx conference was a restriction in the licensing agreement that requires government-hosted events be organized internally. This would mean that

the event would not be open for the public to attend and our audience would have to be capped at one hundred (100) individuals, and those individuals could only be those who work for the City of Philadelphia. Another problem that arose when considering whether or not to plan a TEDx conference is the program requirement, which states that the individual whose name appears on the licensing application must have attended a TED conference in the past. Upon discovering these road-blocks, the group discussed the option of forgoing a TEDx conference, and planning an independently sponsored event with a similar purpose and style instead.

We eventually came to the conclusion that hosting a TEDx conference would fulfill our purpose more succinctly than creating a separate, independently sponsored event. The responsibility of contacting the TEDx Program was delegated to one group member, who emailed a TED representative to inquire about clarification regarding their restrictions on licensing. The representative clarified that licenses were issued to individuals, not institutions or groups from institutions except in the case of universities. If we were to find a partner organization, such as a university that was interested in working with us we could host this conference without having to declare ourselves as a government institution. Moreover, working with a partner expands the likelihood of an individual working on our team having attended a TED event, solving the problem of abiding by TEDx's licensing requirements.

III. Research Process

Our initial stages of research were motivated by group viewings of TED Talks during our meetings. Watching TED Talks about government innovation around the world inspired our research, particularly when we began discussing the types of topics or speakers we wished to invite to our TEDx stage. This weekly activity also familiarized the group with TED's image and the web resources we would take advantage of throughout our research process.

TED and TEDx provided ample information on their websites about the purpose of a TEDx event, the responsibilities of TEDx planners, and the materials necessary to complete prior to applying for a TEDx license. We compiled our research into a feasibility study, seen below in Figure One (1), an informal “Pro/Con” chart used to visualize the benefits and drawbacks of working with the TED foundation to achieve our mission.

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name of TED • the recognition of “TEDx” name will make marketing and spreading the word about the event easier • they can be free • they can be outdoors (with conditions) • All TEDx events automatically get their own event page on the TED website • We can partner with a local university and coordinate event with them • TEDx events are huge, highly publicized events that make a huge difference in the community • Even with the time it takes to get the event approved and planned, we still have plenty of time to organize it before spring 2015 • The TEDx name promotes the integrity of the event by proving to the community that we’re not using the event for profit but to spread great ideas. TEDx events allow us to make a real difference by facilitating the free flow of new ideas • It will be MUCH more difficult to get good speakers if we don’t use the name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Also, we will have the opportunity to meet some incredible speakers and network with them • The TEDx parameters will ensure that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limitations imposed by TED • If gov were to host a TEDx event, the attendees could only be government employees • cannot refer to/use TED leading up to and during the event - only TEDx • cannot endorse/promote sponsors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sponsors must get their own page on website • cannot post TED logo, TED conference material, personal links, corporate websites, promotions for other things, sponsors (must be on separate page) • Someone needs to attend TED conference in order for us to receive license (but if we partner with university, someone from the university may have attended TED before) • Municipal innovation is too rigid of a theme and will be rejected by TED (we need to create a broader more all-encompassing theme even though we can still emphasize innovation)

<p>the event will be successful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officials from other cities are unlikely to attend event unless it's TEDx. Their time is valuable and they won't spend it at an event unless they completely believe it's worthwhile • TEDx will give us a bunch of advice on how to coordinate event after we submit proposal (If we get approved, TEDx won't allow us to fail and ruin their good name. They will want to help us) 	
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Figure One (1) “Pro/Con” Chart: this chart contains information gathered from research performed by all group members. Research was collected from the TED and TEDx organizations and notes from group discussions. The chart was used to provide our group with a visual conglomeration of individual research regarding the question of TEDx Program feasibility.

Once we determined that the TEDx Program was the best way to accomplish our purpose, we began to research the technicalities and specifications outlined by TEDx in greater depth. We learned that in order for a TEDx Program event proposal to be approved, the application must include specific details about our particular event. In other words, prior to sending in a licensing application for TEDx review, it was our responsibility to develop a well-formed plan that included the specific event type, proposed locations, and possible speakers among other important details to be presented within the licensing application.

Planning out our event in preparation for drafting the proposal required researching TEDx guidelines and restrictions. We learned that we would not be able to combine or cobrand our event with other similar events that were dated around our proposed conference date, which was something that we had considered in the early planning stages. Guidelines state that prior to applying for the license, applicants need to have a definitive partner and the name of an individual working with us who had attended at TED event in the past. Applicants also need to have an event name that accords with TEDx naming guidelines which state that the name should

have something to do with the location where the event will be held. Therefore, applicants also need to designate a prospective location where the event will likely be held.

Furthermore, we discovered that a proposal can take up to eight (8) weeks to be reviewed and approved by TEDx. This information motivated the group to continue conducting research that would be useful for event planning purposes and essential in completing a licensing application into a guideline format for future interns to use when continuing the work we will leave behind at the conclusion of the summer 2014 Mayor's Internship Program.

IV. Media Strategy

A significant portion of our research time was spent developing a media strategy to put in place for future interns to follow. It was unanimously agreed upon that we wanted the conference to be a public event that drew in a variety of audience members, but we also wanted to target the "millennial" generation specifically to encourage youth participation in an event centered on innovation. We already knew from researching TEDx Program policies and procedures that simply receiving a TEDx license provided us with promotion advantages. All licensed TEDx events are given an event page on the TED website, making it easy for website visitors searching for a local event to find our conference. Furthermore, the event is given a world-wide platform through the TED internet community, which is largely how TED became so recognizable. TED also provided advice about what types of promotion are most effective for these conferences. It was highly encouraged that once an event is approved organizers develop a website with an original domain name to promote solely the event, not sponsors, corporate websites or personal links.

Despite the media tools provided by TEDx, there remained areas of a media strategy that needed to be researched and drafted. The individuals working on this media strategy split into

broadly segmented traditional media and social media groups. Traditional media research focused on creating a directory of major print, radio, and television media outlets in the city. The team focused on collecting only those publications with relevant content. For example, *WMMR Everything That Rocks* was deemed unsuitable for the event, while *Philly.com* proved to be an excellent resource and opportunity for promotion. These determinations were made by examining the typical audiences of these publications. The question the team aimed to answer was, “what was the age, gender, or regional demographics that these publications commonly reached?” The team also attempted to take a more formal approach to this research by reading through advertising packets made available by these media corporations to interested advertisers, which normally detail audience demographics. However, not all media outlets had these resources available, so researchers had to do the more informal work of estimating audience demographics by the “look and feel” of the publication.

Research on social media focused on determining which social media platforms were most effective at event promotion, and the nature of the commentary that should be presented on these platforms. It was determined that certain social media platforms are considered basic, and thus essential for the promotion of the event like Twitter and Facebook. Other social media platforms were deemed impractical and thus unsuitable for our event type like the video media platform, Vine, which was omitted mainly due to liability concerns. Once the basic platforms were established, the team pursued the next steps of registering handles, drafting possible “hashtags” for Twitter, and brainstorming social media approaches to direct engagement with the community.

Moving forward with the research compiled on these two types of media, a general plan of “Audience-Medium-Message” was adopted. Both groups worked to determine the audience

segments we will try to reach, which medium best reaches these different audiences, and how a message should be tailored to reach that audience in a way that is appropriate for the medium. This formula does require a more in-depth understanding of our target audience, which means that a future media team should examine the psychographics such as beliefs, values and lifestyles of the community we wish to attract in addition to demographics. This information was not a part of the media team's preliminary research, and is an integral part of the media plan to be implemented by successive interns.

In addition to formulating the media plan, the media group reached out to the Press Office of the City to learn their policies and procedures for media surrounding this type of event. It was essential to gather this information to be used as a guideline for scheduling the initial media rollout. During a scheduled meeting, the Press Office presented particular rules about when and how to submit requests for event coverage. We will have to balance the Press Office timeline with the timelines of individual media outlets that we wish to utilize. For example, the Press Office requires that promoting through traditional media start three months prior to the event, while specific media outlets might require planning and booking up to eight months in advance. Therefore, we had to figure out the timelines of coverage for each specific outlet and include them in the media plan, which can be seen below in Figure Two (2).

As part of the collective group's media research, one of the purposes of planning a TEDx conference that was explored at the outset of planning was to promote the City of Philadelphia. Through TEDx Program research, we discovered that the TEDx Program procedures prohibit personal promotion as a purpose of a conference. We reached the conclusion that the entire event should serve as an implicit promotion for city, rather than creating explicit promotion through speakers, content and advertising. This TEDx conference can implicitly promote Philadelphia

through the execution of our media plan. Advertising for the event as well as the event itself should be extremely image-aware by selecting Philadelphia-centered elements to be used throughout the event. For example, the location of the event should show off the Philadelphia landscape, we should aim to connect to local businesses in Philadelphia for sponsorships and encourage media coverage from sources other than our own media team to have a Philadelphia-centric commentary on innovation.

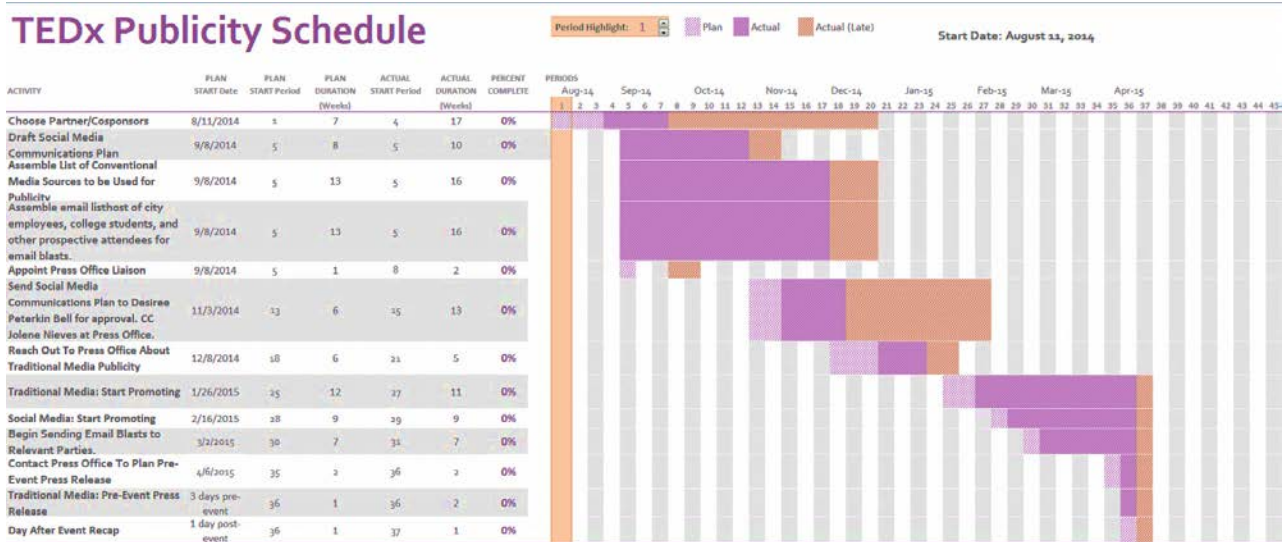


Figure Two (2): This GANTT chart was created to outline the media and advertising schedule for our TEDx event for our research purposes as well as to provide future interns with an appropriate timeline to complete this portion of the project.

V. Event Logistics

Our team was eager to begin logistics planning, but this proved difficult to jump into once we learned about the policies and procedures set forth by two of the most major components of the event: the TEDx Program and the Press Office. Most importantly, of course, we need to obtain a TEDx license before any concrete logistical planning can take place. While the TEDx licensing application requires us to have preliminary ideas about location, dates, and sponsorships, we cannot reach out and confirm these elements unless we have the license in

place to confirm the existence of the event itself. Therefore, much of our logistics planning was centered on brainstorming about how the day of the event should run and what the event itself should look like for attendees, speakers, and volunteers.

The group collectively discussed venue options, beginning with deciding whether we could feasibly plan an outdoor event. Holding an outdoor event was a popular choice among group members because it allowed us to envision a larger, more public and easily accessible event with a focus on Philadelphia-centric characteristics. Locations such as the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Eakins Oval and Love Park were suggested, with the favorite location option being the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. The Parkway has many advantages, including a central location in Philadelphia, proximity to Philadelphia attractions, and the space necessary to host a large-scale event. Envisioned on the Parkway were smaller and more personal talks held concurrently, food trucks, and stages to incorporate the cultural elements encouraged by TED such as dance and music performances. To fulfill this vision, we learned that we will need a permit to close the Parkway, stage and sound equipment to support multiple sets, contracts or agreements with food truck vendors, and the participation of the Sanitation Department for the cleanup. These are only a few considerations, for a very particular type of event that this team has envisioned. Perhaps as the planning for this event continues, these considerations will be deemed unsuitable, but regardless of the event location it is clear that the City will have to leverage inter-departmental and city-wide relationship to ensure a successful event. Nonetheless, this information aided our group in envisioning the end result of this project as well as put more of our timeline into perspective.

VI. Speakers, Partnerships and Sponsors

In addition to our TEDx Program research, many of the group members did research on potential speakers to invite to the conference. One group member had experience recruiting speakers for a panel event they organized at their university, and their advice was vital to our initial speaker search. It was agreed upon that an effective way to generate an interesting and varied list of speakers for our event was to engage speakers that we already have a connection to through our position in city government, the jobs we hold or the universities we attend. Once we are able to recruit a list of speakers that we are personally familiar with, we could later approach speakers who we do not have a personal connection with and present them with our already compiled list of speakers. Our supposition is that these speakers will likely be more interested if they hear who else is being invited to speak and be comforted by the idea that there is already a schedule of speakers being put in place, adding legitimacy to the event as a whole.

During our research, however, many group members simply searched for individuals who specialize in topics that we personally felt were interesting or inspiring in an innovative way. Being a large group of young, motivated individuals interested in public service, it seemed appropriate that we let our interests guide our speaker search as our interests align with the central theme of the event itself. Our research was also guided by the idea that we wanted these speakers to have an especially significant impact on the residents and officials of Philadelphia. Therefore, many of us asked ourselves whether or not the concepts and messages that the speakers we were researching advocated for would be something that we want to see talked about or implemented here in Philadelphia. This tactic proved successful and the group amassed a substantial list of potential speakers that hail from across the nation and many right here in Philadelphia.

Our goal to integrate the culture and community of Philadelphia into this event also guided our search for partnerships and sponsors. Finding a partner has been placed at the top of the priority list for the incoming project team, as this element is essential to the very existence of this event. Without a partner, we will not be able to host a public TEDx event that encompasses all of the ideas and research we performed. Therefore, we brainstormed a few options for partners that we would like to contact about working on this event. Two prominent options included partnering with a local university or a pre-existing TEDx team. Working with a university would provide us with greater opportunities to connect with speakers and expand our options for venue locations. Working with a pre-existing TEDx Program in Philadelphia would provide us with guidance and planning experience specific to TEDx Programing. Regardless of what kind of partner we are fortunate enough to team up with, joining forces would open up even greater avenues of connection for finding speakers and soliciting sponsorships.

Our TEDx Program research revealed several restrictions that the TED organization places on event sponsorships. TEDx actually provides a list of pre-approved sponsors. Furthermore, any promotion of sponsor involvement is limited by TED's guidelines. Sponsoring companies cannot be advertised on the home page of the event website and if the company has a logo they wish to be displayed, it can only be of a certain size. Thinking ahead, these restrictions may cause potential sponsors to be hesitant about their involvement with our event and thus cause hitches in future planning.

VII. Next Steps

Our most important task in the coming weeks is to find a partner to co-plan this event with in order to finalize our license proposal to the TEDx Program. Thereafter, it is essential that a team of volunteers or interns are selected to carry out the remainder of the planning for this

event. Although each member of this group wishes to continue working on this project, our time working with the City was unfortunately only so long. From that point, working on contacting venues and setting a date would allow the succeeding team to adjust the timeline we created based on our research to a realistic and concrete timeframe.

Conclusion

Our team has successfully completed phase one of this project. The goals of phase one of this project were to conduct informed brainstorming sessions to lay the foundation for our expectations for this event as well as conduct the qualitative and quantitative research necessary to move forward in the execution of this event. The completion of phase one is marked by the completion of the tool kit that contains the totality of notes and research compiled during phase one that are to be used as a guide for phase two of this project. Phase two of planning this event will involve a new team of interns and volunteers who will first be responsible for confirming our potential partner for this event. Thereafter, the license application can be completed, submitted for review, and the first steps outlined in our deliverables concerning the event itself can begin taking place.