**Large-Scale Fundraising Case Study**

**Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

*Directions: Read the case study and spend some time reflecting on how the staff of the Rockville High School Rampage planned and executed a large-scale fundraising event.*

1. As you read, annotate your article according to the following system:

* Underline how the Rampage staff planned and executed the 5K Rampace event.
* Highlight the multiple ways the Rampage staff reached its community or audience through the Rampace event.
* Put an exclamation point (!) next to anything that surprises you and explain WHY in the margin next to that paragraph.
* Put a question mark (?) next to anything you are unsure about or would like to discuss with others and explain WHY in the margin next to that paragraph.

***Background***

During the 2014-2015 school year, Meklit Bekele and Elissa Britt, photographers and financial advisers of the Rampage at Rockville High School, Greta Anderson, editor-in-chief, and Jessica Nassau, adviser, shared background information and answered questions about the school’s annual 5K fundraiser for the newspaper. The newspaper served about 1300 students that year.

Bekele and Britt were originally recruited as photographers, but found that their position gave them more free time during the class period because most of their publications work was done after school. According to Bekele, Nassau asked several photographers who had time during the school day to “help her with the financing and the fundraising, all that stuff that’s in the background of journalism that not a lot of people know about.” The Rampace event existed before the girls took over the planning, but they were able to use their roles as financial advisers to innovate and improve the event. As financial advisers, they plan both small and large fundraisers and help organize advertising and the publication budget.

The Rampage conducts small fundraisers every year and puts on two big fundraisers: the Rampace 5K race and Ram Idol. They raise almost $5,000 every year through the Rampace 5K, which is about half of their printing budget. The students plan all aspects of the event, including registrations, T-shirt design, signage, promotion and race sponsorships. The adviser takes care of the legal issues, like permits and road closures, as well as handling the money. All newspaper students are expected to work the event, and many newspaper parents help. On the day of the event, there is also a raffle for goods and services from race sponsors, a student band for entertainment, snacks and drinks for sale, and an awards ceremony. About 300 people run every year and the whole community comes out to support the event, even the principal.

***Interview***

*Question: How do you manage your structured leadership model when planning large events?*

Answer (**Anderson**): “It was actually mostly just [Bekele and Britt]. They planned all the stuff to get the word out. They made posters, contacted advertisers and sent out tons of emails about advertising opportunities. I was just along for the ride.”

**Bekele**: “The best part is we all balance each other out.”

**Anderson**: “It’s good to bounce ideas off of each other for what would work best with the money we had. For example, we really wanted road signs this year, which were $30 if we ordered them but $5 if we made them ourselves. It took a lot more labor, and they didn’t look as professional, but they got the word out.”

*Question: What was the process like as you planned the event?*

Answer (**Bekele**): “We started with the registrations. We had to get the word out. Ms. Nassau handles the licensing and legal issues. She has all her students try to get four registrations in by a certain date, and she offers a free shirt if you get four or more. So, we designed a spreadsheet to track how many people we had and how many we needed.”

**Britt**: “We also have a midpoint for the registration deadline so the price is cheaper by $5 if you sign up by a certain date. We try to push it out on Twitter and through the morning announcements and our publication so people know what is happening and can get a discount.”

**Anderson**: “We also did posters around the school. We put them on the doors of other classrooms. You have to make sure your whole staff is involved.”

**Bekele**: “So, that was the beginning. As it went on, our attention turned to setup. We needed to make sure we had certain things and were ready for the event since it came up really fast.”

The girls indicated that they set the vision and then involved the staff in the execution process. On the day of the race, the whole staff is involved in putting it on.

*Question: What motivates the whole staff to help?*

Answer: (**Nassau**): “It is tied to a grade [for the quarter], but they just have to be there and be involved. If they won’t be there, they need a parent note and they have to do service to the event to make up for it, like hanging signs or doing registrations. Students who bring in four registrations get a free T-shirt, and the student who brings in the most registrations gets a gift card from me. A student always designs the shirts and they are very popular. This is a school with a lot of spirit and the kids and teachers want the shirts. They can’t get them without registering.”

**Bekele**: “Rampace is also a big thing. A lot of people know about it and are excited about it.”

*Question: How did the Rampace event get this big? How did the community come to support it?*

Answer: (**Nassau**): “It started before any of our time. The adviser before me was a runner and thought this would be a good idea, so this is the sixth year. We usually have about 300 people register, which is a good number for us to handle. Our parents are wonderful and supportive, as well as student athletes. It really is the journalism students going out to get registrations. The school has a lot of pride in the newspaper, since it is such a strong publication. We need to raise thousands of dollars each year, which is hard to do. We have been able to drop our smaller fundraisers, like car washes, and focus on two big fundraisers each year, which get our full effort. The police are involved, and shutting down roads, and EMTs. We just focus, focus, focus.”

*Question: How has the event changed each year?*

Answer: (**Nassau**): “Each year I learned how to make it better. This year, it was having fundraising specialists. The photographer/fundraiser mix is a good one because you have photographers who want to do more. Our editors are pulled in too many different directions. We have also added different features of the event over time, like the raffle and the student band. Last year we also had food trucks and a silent auction. This year, signage was a big improvement. We made a big banner we can use again. We use Active.com for registrations, which makes the process smooth.”

**Bekele**: “By the end of this year, we will also try to make notes for future financial advisers that come in and take on this job.”

*Question: How does this benefit the staff, publication, and advertising partners?*

Answer: (**Nassau**): “Think about what a great business learning opportunity this is for students. To be able to go to a job and say that you were a fundraising specialist who has done cost-benefit analysis is a great thing. Also, the event is worth it because we raise half of our budget and we don’t have to worry about it the rest of the year. We cut out car washes entirely and my goal as an adviser is always to have half a year ahead for money we need in our account. I try to leave $1,000 in the account at all times to be able to put on large events like this. If there is any extra, I put it toward educational opportunities for the students, like CSPA or JEA/NSPA conferences. The money has also allowed us to increase the size of our newspaper from 16 to 20 pages and to add special supplement sections.”

**Britt**: “This fundraiser combines fundraising and sponsorship because we get advertisers to sponsor the event and put their logos on the back of the shirt, and students wear these shirts all the time. We also put money back into improving the Rampace event itself.”

Nassau added that Britt now plans to major in business, partially as a result of her involvement with this event.

*Question: What recommendations would you make to a school that wanted to do this?*

Answer: (**Britt**): “Check the city regulations for if they are able to do it, because it’s a lot of getting permits and having cops there to close out the roads. You can’t test out to see if people are interested, but our school has a big cross-country team. I wouldn’t suggest doing something involving running if people aren’t into that.”

**Nassau**: “We are fortunate to have a track coach who is willing to help us every year. You have to understand your audience.”

**Britt**: “Collaborate with everyone you possibly can at your school.”

**Bekele**: “I also think dedication is a big part of it. You need to have people who are dedicated and who will finish the whole event, not just start it and leave it where it is.”

**Nassau**: “You could start it as a one-mile fun run around the track so you don’t have to deal with the police. You can test it and figure out if you have enough interest for something longer. You can even let people know that if the event goes well, you will try a 5K the next year.”

**Britt**: “You can gauge whether people are into the event. It is important to involve the student body. Both Rampace and Ram Idol get people involved in different ways, a race and a singing contest.”

***Evaluation***

2. Based on what you read, list three (3) considerations that a publication should take into account when developing a large-scale fundraising event. Then, explain why each consideration is important.

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| **Consideration** | **Why is this important?** |
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