

“Every Mother Deserves a Doula” Strategic Campaign

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Introduction

Throughout the fall semester, I have grown both professionally and academically through my work with Gennisi Charitable Birth Services in the Public Relations Campaigns course. In collaboration with my group, I developed the “Every Mother Deserves a Doula” campaign, designed to strengthen brand awareness and communicate three central messages: doula care is accessible, affordable, and inclusive; Gennisi empowers families through emotional, physical, and social support; and its services improve birth outcomes while reducing stress and complications. The primary deliverables of this project included a comprehensive campaign plan and an accompanying campaign book. This experience not only demonstrated my ability to translate public relations theories into practice but also deepened my understanding of strategic communication, thereby preparing me for professional advancement following graduation. This reflection paper critically examines the development and execution of the campaign plan, analyzing how the project fostered my professional growth, deepened my mastery of public relations theory, and demonstrated my readiness to apply strategic communication practices in future professional contexts.

Summary

The “Every Mother Deserves a Doula” campaign was designed to reshape community perceptions of doula care and to increase visibility for Gennisi Charitable Birth Services as an inclusive and trusted maternal health resource. At its core, the campaign sought to build organizational credibility, expand public understanding of the doula’s role, and strengthen brand awareness within East Tennessee. The primary target public consisted of women of color aged 18 to 40, particularly first-time and low-income mothers, while secondary audiences included

families, caretakers, and maternal health organizations whose influence and collaboration are instrumental for aiding mothers. To achieve its goals, the campaign employed a multi-faceted strategy: enhancing digital engagement through social media education and storytelling, fostering community trust through workshops and events, and elevating credibility through partnerships and earned media coverage. Evaluation methods combined quantitative measures, such as social media growth, engagement metrics, and event attendance. Additionally, qualitative feedback from surveys and focus groups ensured that both numerical outcomes and personal experiences informed the assessment of campaign effectiveness.

Application of PR Theory and Concepts

The campaign plan was firmly rooted in public relations theory, beginning with a situational analysis that identified both challenges and opportunities for Gennisi Charitable Birth Services. Research revealed limited public awareness of the organization, contributed to by low literacy rates in Tennessee and misconceptions that doula care is reserved for affluent families. At the same time, demographic data and environmental trends highlighted a pressing need for maternal health support among low-income women of color, particularly in Knoxville. This analysis informed the campaign's strategic direction by emphasizing inclusivity, accessibility, and education as central themes. Key messages drew from framing and persuasion techniques, with the unifying narrative "Doula care is for everyone" crafted to counter misconceptions and position Gennisi as both credible and compassionate. Tactics such as infographics comparing doulas to midwives and OB-GYNs, testimonial campaigns, and interactive Q&A sessions aligned with agenda-setting and framing theories, while incorporating workshops and partnerships reflected the two-way symmetrical model by fostering dialogue and collaboration

with stakeholders. Evaluation planning further demonstrated application of public relations theories, as goals were structured according to the SMART framework and accountability was embedded through both quantitative measures (social media metrics, event attendance) and qualitative assessments (surveys, focus groups). Collectively, these elements illustrate how the campaign integrated classroom learning with practical execution to address organizational challenges and promote Gennisi's mission.

Developed Skills

This campaign not only aimed to improve the public image of Gennisi Charitable Birth Services but also significantly strengthened my personal skills in the field of public relations. The development process required strategic thinking, particularly in transitioning from isolated tactics to a more integrated campaign plan. Project management and collaboration were central to the experience, as I coordinated with peers, synthesized diverse contributions, and managed timelines to ensure consistent progress. In addition, I refined my design and professional communication skills by producing polished infographics, media pitches, and social media mockups that aligned with the campaign's objectives. Ethical reasoning also played a critical role, as the project required attention to inclusivity and accessibility in maternal health messaging, reinforcing the importance of equity and responsibility in strategic communication practice. While these skills reflect significant professional development, the campaign process also presented challenges that required adaptation and resilience, and ultimately contributed to my growth as a strategic communicator.

Challenges and Growth

The campaign process was not without obstacles, many of which required problem-solving and adaptation. Limited resources posed a consistent challenge, particularly for a nonprofit organization such as Gennisi that relies heavily on donations and government funding. A widespread lack of understanding regarding doula care, often confused with the role of a midwife, complicated efforts to raise awareness of Gennisi's services. Another difficulty arose in attempting to identify and engage a representative sample of women of color in the Knoxville area, as our group members had minimal contacts within this demographic. These challenges required strategic adjustments, such as tailoring educational infographics to clarify distinctions between doulas, midwives, and OB-GYNs, and emphasizing storytelling tactics that highlighted accessibility and community relevance. Through this process, I experienced significant personal growth. I developed confidence in campaign planning and strengthened my ability to adapt strategies to real-world obstacles.

Conclusion

The "Every Mother Deserves a Doula" campaign plan was both a demonstration of applied learning and a key step in my professional growth. By taking public relations theories and putting them into practice, I was able to help strengthen Gennisi Charitable Birth Services' visibility while also building my own skills in strategic communication, project management, and PR design. Working on this project showed me how important it is to connect theory with real-world application, since the challenges we faced required flexibility, creativity, and collaboration. It is clear to me that this capstone reflection represents the culmination of my

academic journey in public relations and has prepared me to move forward with confidence into my career.

References

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