

Reflection Essay  
Landis Mangum

MEJO 332: Public Relations Writing has been one of my favorite courses through The Hussman School of Journalism and Media. This course has allowed me to improve upon my writing skills and apply them to real-world situations. Through this course, I learned the best practices and tools for PR strategies and communication. I am very excited to take what I have learned and apply it in my future endeavors. Professor Carter made my experience in this course very enjoyable. She answered all of my questions and explained all the communication strategies with great detail. My client during this course was Habitat for Humanity of Orange County. I was able to work on communication strategies for them and provide the team at Habitat with recommendations. I really enjoyed my experience in this course, and I learned a ton.

The most valuable part of my experience with Habitat for Humanity of Orange County was being able to apply the skills I learned in class to a real client. Throughout the semester, I learned how to write a news release, fact sheet, speech, direct mail letter, and so much more. Not only was I working on the assignment for the course, but I was also working on a communication tool that a real-world client would be able to apply to their communication strategies. It was very valuable to work on real-world situations and real-world communication tools. Additionally, I gained various professional skills, such as teamwork, problem solving, and leadership. This involved writing emails to the communications team, organizing group meetings, and collaborating with a team to provide recommendations to Habitat. Overall, I believe this experience was very valuable in building written and professional skills as I was able to gain real-world experience.

While I do not think there was a least valuable part to this service-learning experience, I do think some aspects could have been improved. For instance, while my team had in-person meetings with our client, our internal team meetings were conducted on Zoom. I believe that collaborating in person would have enabled us to work more efficiently as a team.

The most challenging aspect of this project was time management and finding a time to meet as a team and with our client. Because we all have different schedules, it was hard to find a time we could all meet together. In order to overcome this challenge, we created a group chat and used when2meet.com to find a time where everyone was available. These tools helped us be successful in managing our time and effectively communicate with one another.

My team and I developed three recommendations that Habitat could implement regarding its PR efforts. First, Habitat could create a TikTok page to connect with younger audiences. This page would help build brand awareness and expand reach on a platform that is not currently used by Habitat. Second, Habitat could improve upon its website features such as implementing a calendar of upcoming events, a 40th anniversary tab, and contact information for staff and board members. This will help people access more materials on the website. Finally, Habitat could continue to develop upon community partnerships and expand its outreach to nearby schools. This will help amplify their message across different channels.

Habitat for Humanity of Orange County was an incredible client. I would recommend that Carolina Center for Public Service continue to work with Habitat as an APPLIES client. Our point of contact, Kaitlyn Kopala, was very easy to communicate with. She connected us with Charles Mullis, the Johnson Service Corps intern for Habitat. Both Kaitlyn and Charles were very communicative and helped us truly learn about communication/PR strategies within a nonprofit organization.

Overall, MEJO 332 has been a very rewarding course. I have gained many professional skills that I am excited to continue to develop upon and use in the future. I'm very grateful to Professor Carter and the team at Habitat for Humanity of Orange County for guiding me through this course.