

Hosanna House: Digital Multimedia Studio

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I. The Consulting Situation

The Organization

The Hosanna House is a multi-service community center in Wilksburg, located at 807 Wallace Avenue in the old Horner School. They serve a diverse group of people from across Allegheny County, most coming from the East End. Their clients are predominantly African American (about 85%), and the majority of youth served come from low-income single parent homes. Their mission statement is to *provide opportunities that will empower families and individuals to discover, acknowledge, and develop their maximum potential.*

In order to achieve their mission, Hosanna House offers a variety of different programs:

- Child care for young children, which includes day care and education for children 5 and under.
- Youth services for school-age children up to high school, including recreation, education, and a summer camp.
- Family support, with adult education, as well as special programs for pregnant or breastfeeding women and their children.
- Health and dental services.
- Job training, which provides education and training that help individuals succeed in their careers.

Staff

The Hosanna House is a fairly large non-profit organization with approximately 82 staff members, most of whom are full time, and about 150 volunteers support the house each year. A Board of Directors governs Hosanna House, which is responsible for setting the policies of Hosanna House and also approve the strategic plans and budget. The Executive Director is Leon E. Haynes III. Under him, there is a senior management team of four people: finance director, director of business operations, facility manager and the project manager. Under them, there are program managers for each department.

Funds

The current budget is \$4,500,000 and expected to almost double in the next four years. A large portion of this is used to fund the Child Care and Job Training programs, which have budgets of around \$1,000,000 each. Funding comes from three main sources: fees (about 20%), government program support (about 30 to 40%) and grants from other foundations for programs (about 25 to 35%).

The Technical Environment

Technology is used at Hosanna House for two purposes: to serve clients, and for staff and management. There are three computer labs open to clients. One is a 16 computer lab for youth to use during the day and after school which provides tutoring and Internet connectivity to students. There is a lab with 14 computers in the job training program used for resumes, training, and job search. There is also a four computer lab in the Early Childhood Center working preschoolers and K-2nd graders after school. A fourth lab is currently being built; it is a multimedia lab with 5 iMacs and one G4 machine which will be used to edit sound and video to create movies and CD's. This will be used by high school students who will learn to use digital multimedia equipment to record themselves telling about their lives.

For staff, there is a network with 24 computers throughout Hosanna House. Most are desktops, with 3 laptops for staff members who travel. Senior staff uses a networked calendar, and all program managers and senior staff members have e-mail capacity. This network is connected via DSL and is supplied by an outside technology manager. Hosanna House is currently working on upgrading the network to a dark fiber connection.

Consulting Focus

The focus of this consultation was to develop the digital multimedia studio that Hosanna House is setting up. The studio will be the basis of a Digital Story-Telling program where high school students tell their life stories and record them digitally to create a video or audio CD. Through this, students will be provided with a constructive and exciting activity that will teach them to learn to operate digital audio equipment, as well as help them explore their goals.

Deron Fields, Special Projects Coordinator, is the community partner. He works with the youth center in Hosanna House, as well as in developing the studio. He will be in charge of the studio when it is finished. The goals of this consultation are to help Deron gain the knowledge and skills to manage the studio, use the equipment, and teach others to use the equipment.

To achieve this, the scope of work of the consultation has four main steps:

- *Design the studio and choose appropriate equipment.*
Choose a design for the studio that will be inviting to the members who will use it, and choose equipment that will best suit the needs of the studio.
- *Set up the computers and equipment.*
The 5 iMacs and 1 G4 machine will all be connected via AirPort, a wireless network. It will also be connected to Hosanna House's DSL line for internet access. The equipment in the studio besides computers includes printers, scanners, digital video and still cameras, and recording equipment (microphones, the Digi001 machine, speakers and headphones, etc.)
- *Learn to use the all the equipment.*
In setting up the equipment, Mr. Fields and I will learn how to use each piece of equipment.
- *Learn to use the software.*
After learning how to use the recording equipment, Mr. Fields will learn to use specific programs to edit sound and video.

The following are the expected results of the consultation:

- The studio should be completed or near completion.
- Mr. Fields should be comfortable using all the equipment and maintaining the studio.
- Mr. Fields will be able to teach other staff members how to use the equipment, develop a program for the students, and eventually teach the students to use the equipment also.
- Hosanna House will have the increased capacity to use multimedia equipment and make CD's and movies.
- Other programs at Hosanna House will be enhanced by using the multimedia studio, e.g., the job training program.

II. Outcomes and Recommendations

Consulting Outcomes:

Studio Design.

- Consulting Work:

Mr. Fields and I helped to design the digital recording studio by helping to choose appropriate computers, software, and other equipment (including printers, scanners, and digital still and video cameras). We also visited The Community House, a non-profit organization that has a multi-media studio, to see how their studio is used, and to brainstorm for ideas on how our studio would be used.

- Outcomes:

Computers, software, and equipment was chosen and ordered based on utility to the studio and price. The computers chosen were 5 iMacs for general use and 1 G4 for staff use. Software includes [to be filled in].

Set up the computers and equipment.

- Consulting Work:

Together, Mr. Fields and I set up the computers and connected the equipment to the computers.

- Outcomes and Increased Capacity:

Mr. Fields learned to set up the computers, and install the necessary software. He also learned to set up the equipment, connect it to the computer, and install the drivers and software for each device. All the computers and equipment are fully functional and ready for use. The computers are connected via an AirPort (wireless) network, which is connected to the internet.

- Sustainability:

The increased capacity will be sustained as Mr. Fields continues to use the equipment. Also, he can set up new equipment to add to the studio over time.

- Recommendations:

To keep learning features of the equipment and become more familiar and comfortable with it, Mr. Fields should continue to use the computers and equipment, especially to show others to use it.

Learn to use the equipment.

- Consulting Work:

In setting up the equipment, we learned how each piece of equipment works. Also, some time was set aside each week to try using the equipment, e.g. try to print a test page, or scan an image.

- Outcomes and Increased Capacity:

Mr. Fields is now comfortable with all the equipment in the studio. This includes using the digital video camera to shoot a movie, using the digital still camera to take pictures, printing a document, and scanning an image.

- Sustainability:

Again, these skills will be sustained as he continues to use them and teaches others to use them.

Learn to use the software.

- Consulting Work:

Mr. Fields and I installed applications for each iMac, installed the devices (e.g. printers and scanners), and installed additional software for the studio (Norton, MS Office, Pro Tools... this will be refined). We used iMovie to edit a movie, and learned to use iTunes to burn a CD. We

also transferred movies from the digital video camera to the computer, and pictures from the digital still camera to the computer. After scanning an image, we learned to view and edit the image using Photoshop (?).

- **Outcomes and Increased Capacity:**

Mr. Fields can now use all the software and the equipment in combination. He has created CD's, printed and scanned images, and edited movies on his own.

- **Sustainability:**

Again, these skills will be sustained as he continues to use them and teach others to use them.

Additional Recommendations:

The following recommendations are ideas to enhance the studio, as well as to continue using and expanding on the skills learned during the consultation.

Involving Other Programs at Hosanna House

- *Job Interview Training*

The recording studio could be used to video record mock interviews that staff in the job training program conduct. The videos can be edited and then shown to the students in the program so they can observe their own behavior on the interview. Future videos can be made as job interview skills improve so that a final movie of an ideal interview can be made for each student.

This is a way to expand on the job training program, which Hosanna House already has. It will give participants in the program an idea of what to aspire to on an interview.

- *Hosanna House Informational Video*

As part of training the other staff members to use the recording equipment, Mr. Fields can help them make an informational video about Hosanna House. This idea has a lot of flexibility, but the main idea is to familiarize other staff with all the equipment and the procedures of using it. By involving all of Hosanna House in making a movie, other departments and programs will hear about the studio and the programs involved with it, so more members and staff will want to participate in it. Also, the end product will be an informational video that can introduce Hosanna House to outside viewers, and show the many aspects and programs it has.

- *Resources*

No additional resources are required to implement these ideas, though it does require the cooperation of staff members from other programs at Hosanna House. For the job interview training, the training staff could record the interviews outside of the studio, and then have a staff member at the studio edit the movie. Alternatively, the staff from both programs can collaborate with each other to record and edit the movie.

An important part of producing a movie, particularly for the informational videos about the programs at Hosanna House, deciding what to put in the video and how it will be filmed.

- *Contact*

The Community House:

A non-profit organization in the North Side with a recording studio used by children to create and edit movies. They have experience making movies with students, and are an excellent resource for information on how to make a movie.

Contact Jan Leo. Phone: (412) 321-3900 ext. 202. E-mail: jleo@telerama.lm.com.

- *Opportunities*

For making an informational video, there are many different possibilities. There could be a separate movie made for each specific program, or one movie that covers them all. There could also be a separate in-depth movie for the studio itself, which could go through the process of how a student or staff member produces a movie. That movie could then be shown to students in the program as an instructional video on how to make a movie. This can serve as the first opportunity for students to use the recording equipment, preparing them for the story-telling program, or for any members or staff to have a chance to learn to use the equipment.

Music Recording Studio

Adding music equipment to the digital recording studio will be an inexpensive way to enhance the studio. Hosanna House's mission is to help individuals realize their full potential, and an important part of doing this is providing them with enough opportunities to develop potential in different areas. One area that can have a large impact on high school students, or students of any age, is learning to create music. Having music equipment available to the students expands on the same opportunity that the recording studio fulfills: for students to express themselves in a meaningful way, and for students to get excited about learning something that could change their lives.

Once the studio and staff are ready, turning the "digital story-telling lab" into a "music recording studio" is a small task that will have a big effect. To do this, the studio should have at least one keyboard, and MIDI editing software (this will be discussed in the Resources section).

When music is a part of the studio, the sound editing software that Mr. Fields is learning can be used for music editing too. Also, Mr. Fields and the other staff at Hosanna House can begin to explore technology in the music field.

- *Resources:*

- **Keyboard**

A relatively inexpensive and easy-to-learn tool that will help students learn about music. A keyboard with MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) capability can be hooked up to the Digi001 machine using a MIDI cable, and then it can be recorded digitally the same way as sound from a microphone would. (Similarly, these recordings can be edited on the computer in the same way).

Opportunities:

The simplest way to use this instrument is to have it available to the students and let them explore the different ways of using it. MIDI keyboards can produce the sounds of many other instruments, so the students could make music using a wide variety of different instruments.

Another use for the keyboard is to have a keyboard lesson program taught by a staff member (if available). There is also software available that gives lessons on how to play the keyboard and teaches music theory.

- **MIDI editing software**

Easy to learn software that allows the user to create their own original music using a wide variety of synthesized instruments. This will probably be used by students who already have some musical skill or knowledge. I suggest Performer, a popular and simple MIDI editing program.

Opportunities:

Students can compose their own music, again, using a variety of synthesized instruments. This music can be combined with input from the microphone (singing, or other instruments available to the students) or from the keyboard. Students can make entire CD's of their own music or use their music in the movies they create for the story telling program.

- **Contacts:**

Pianos n' Stuff:

Sells keyboards and other music equipment, and can answer questions about which keyboard would be appropriate for the studio. Also sells software.

Phone: (412) 828-1003. Homepage: <http://www.pnsmusic.com>

Riccardo Schulz, Carnegie Mellon University:

Teaches music and sound recording at CMU and knows students that can help set up a keyboard or MIDI software, if necessary.

E-mail (preferred): rs6k@andrew.cmu.edu. Phone: (412) 687-3155.

<http://www.motu.com/>

Manufacturers of Performer and other MIDI hardware and software. Their website has product information, product purchase information, and contact information.

Additional Contacts:

Full Compass Audio - 1-800-356-5844 x1147 (Julie)

Sweetwater Sound - 1-800-222-4700 x1357 (Nika Aldrich)

Studio Staff Organization

In order for any program involving the recording studio to be successful, the staff involved should be organized under one person. During the development of the studio, many different staff members from different departments of Hosanna House were involved in making decisions for the studio, which caused some confusion. If one person is in charge of maintaining the studio, he can assume the responsibilities of developing a structured program for the students and other members who will use the studio, securing the equipment and the data stored on computers, adding new equipment to the studio, and training other staff members. These tasks can be shared with other staff, but the person in charge is responsible for making sure that all these things get done. This way, miscommunications and misunderstandings are avoided.

Equipment List

The following is a list of the equipment finally purchased for use in the studio.

Equipment:

- 1 G4 Machine
- 5 iMac machines
- 1 Canon ZR 25 Digital Camcorder
- 1 Canon ZR 30 Digital Camcorder
- 2 Kodak Photosmart Digital Still Camera
- 2 Microtek Scanmaker Scanner 5700
- 6 Lexmark Z23 printers

Software:

- Microsoft Office
- Norton System Works
- Adobe Photoshop
- iMovie (which came with the iMac and G4 machines)
- iTunes (also came with iMac and G4 machines)