



Communication Audit  
Fill Your Bucket List Foundation

## **BACKGROUND**

Cancer affects the lives of millions of people impacting not only patients but the families of patients who cope with the difficulties of terminal illness. Cancer treatment is not only costly to families that are affected by the disease, but it is also emotionally straining as family members can be severely debilitated by the disease, impacting the lives of their loved ones. Every cancer patient deserves the chance to escape from the stress of treatment and doctors visits, but many patients find it difficult to spend money on travel or experiences when they are overwhelmed with the burden of costly medical expenses. Fill Your Bucket List Foundation supports these patients, granting wishes and helping lifelong dreams become a reality.

Fill Your Bucket List Foundation was founded in 2014 by Peggy Gibson Carroll, who spent 30 years working extensively in patient advocacy, specifically for oncology patients. When Carroll's father was diagnosed with lung cancer, she urged him to create a bucket list of things he had always wanted to do. With this, the foundation was founded.

Fill Your Bucket List Foundation is now an organization that seeks to allow people the time and means to be able to retreat from cancer and to enjoy time with their loved ones. They do this by granting wishes to cancer patients, ages 18 or older, that have been nominated by a friend or family member to the organization. The organization then uses money raised through donations and fundraisers to pay for a wish for the cancer patient; this includes a variety of

different wishes, personalized for each patient's desires: beach trips, excursions to the mountains, and more. By the end of 2018, the organization will have granted 100 wishes to adults with cancer, creating a lasting impact on the lives of patients and their families.

The organization's primary form of communication with their key publics is their website. The organization is also active on several social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The Fill Your Bucket list community is a large group of donors and volunteers that believe in the mission and cause of the organization. These publics receive regular communication via e-mail updates and social media postings. On social channels, the organization promotes fundraising and events by sharing patient stories and experiences. These tactics encourage increased donorship from existing donor pools and reach a new audience of potential donors.

Each year Fill Your Bucket List Foundation holds an annual Bucket Bash that helps them to raise a significant amount of funding- helping to make the organization sustainable long term. The event includes chef competitions with local restaurant chefs, silent and live auction items, and live musical performances. Each year the event successfully raises funding to keep the organization running efficiently.

Fill Your Bucket List Foundation is run and organized by a comprehensive team of full time employees and part time volunteers and board members. The team is led by executive director, Marie Duncan Otto. As a support network, 13 individuals make up the board of directors. Board members range from local news to marketing professionals, to financial advisors.

## **SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **Strengths:**

Many of the strengths for Fill Your Bucket List's communication channels are related to their website. We found the following to be the strengths of their communication channels:

- The website is easy to navigate
- The important and most relevant content stands out promoting easier navigation
- The website has a consistent color scheme
- The website reflects the lighthearted and positive tone of the organization overall
- The mobile support is good
  - The mobile version of the website is still easy to navigate
- They have relatively large following on their social media:
  - 2.2 Thousand on facebook, over 300 on instagram

### **Weaknesses:**

The following are a few things we noted that can be improved to enhance the foundation's communication channels:

- The website contains too many different pages as it takes too many clicks to get to the page and information the customer may want.
- Visuals and pictures used for social media should be more professional and higher quality. Creating a consistent and clean aesthetic on social media would be beneficial.
- FYBL would benefit from an increase in coverage and awareness overall. There is an inefficient amount of news coverage in the last 12 months and the

- Social media platforms are lacking followers especially Instagram.
- Inconsistent fonts on the website.

### **Opportunities:**

Fill Your Bucket List Foundation has many opportunities for growth, donations, and community impact as listed below:

- There is a large opportunity to expand donations by creating easy ways to donate and get involved. The website is the main avenue for that process. The links are straightforward and if customers don't feel comfortable enough to donate online, you can donate by mail. This is a great opportunity to leave the door of donation open to a wider range of demographics, those who are more comfortable with technology and those who are not.
- There is opportunity to grow through utilizing the media. The annual Bucket Bash is a great way to get earned media. It is also a great way to put the foundation's name out in the public. Utilizing the stories of the people who are helped by the Fill Your Bucket List Foundation and sending a media kit to news outlets increases the chances of the media picking up the story to run on the air.
- The brand and organization is already strong. If social media is used efficiently, there is opportunity to skip the media and gain direct attention with the intended audience. The company already has active Twitter, Youtube and Facebook accounts. Those same stories that can be used to try and earn media can also be used and put up on the social media account. The attention of the general public could be caught by updating them regularly with high quality videos of the work that they do.

## **Threats:**

The following is a list of the threats and challenges Fill Your Bucket List Foundation has encountered and continues to struggle with:

- The largest threats to this organization have been brand recognition and lack of donors/sponsors. Since Fill Your Bucket List Foundation strives to grant the wishes of North Carolina residents, it is not widely known to those outside the state. This creates a restricted population of potential donors and sponsors.
  - Attracting large sponsors may be difficult for this organization because of their size and limited brand recognition.
- Fill Your Bucket List has encountered is competition from similar nonprofits. Most competition comes from national organizations, such as Make-A-Wish, rather than from organizations located in North Carolina. There are over 40 national wish-fulfillment organizations in the United States alone.
  - Being a small, state-centered nonprofit puts the Fill Your Bucket List Foundation at risk because individuals may feel more inclined or prefer to donate to larger organizations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We recommend that Fill Your Bucket List expand the ‘News’ section of their website beyond previous press coverage. The page should serve as a newsroom that includes a full media kit with fact sheets, past news releases, visual materials and more for reporters. We suggest

additional website improvements to better organize information and increase aesthetic and style consistency.

Creating a brand style guide would make communications more cohesive to create a professional and polished image. Designating official colors, typography, and tone that embody the Foundation's mission would build a stronger and more recognizable brand and organizational identity. This would tie together the website, social media graphics, printed materials, and other communications pieces.

The Foundation should increase its emphasis on volunteer opportunities in its communications. Presently, its website, social media and email newsletters give more weight to donations and sponsorship. While monetary contributions might be more directly helpful to the organization's goals, publicizing volunteer opportunities would show that even people without the financial means to donate are welcome to lend their time and skills to the cause. The website should have a page dedicated to volunteer opportunities, which might include a volunteer interest form and heartwarming testimonials from previous volunteers.

Although the Bucket Bash is the organization's main source of funds, the Foundation would benefit from increasing fundraising efforts throughout the year. The Foundation could use more direct outreach and supplement their direct mail campaigns with phone banks to contact key potential donors.

In terms of messaging, the Foundation could further differentiate itself from Make-A-Wish by emphasizing that cancer-diagnosed adults' wishes tend to be comparatively modest and family-focused. Placing greater emphasis on smaller wishes with deeper meaning would set Fill Your Bucket List apart and show that donations go a long way.

Additionally, communications should highlight the fact that the Foundation serves North Carolinian adults specifically. If people see that their donation creates a difference locally, they might feel more connected to the cause and willing to contribute. Beyond emphasizing proximity across owned media, the Foundation could generate game-changing earned media by pitching feature stories to regional and statewide news outlets. Given the element of human interest, reporters might like to cover the stories of recipients and families that are willing and enthusiastic about having their journey and wish featured. This would increase brand recognition. Additionally, these stories could include the call-to-action to donate, volunteer or attend Bucket Bash.