



Rockingham County Animal Shelter's:

Don't Judge a Dog by Its Color

Abby Barrow: albarrow@uncg.edu

Jessica Flanagan: jflanagan@uncg.edu

Meredith Keller: mlkelle3@uncg.edu

Harriet Joines: hdjoines@uncg.edu

Ashley Corsi: ancorsi@uncg.edu

RCS 362

December 14, 2009

Executive Summary

“Dogs are Color Blind, You Should be Too” this is the slogan that encompasses the essence of mission. Our mission to find homes for dogs of every color, especially the black dogs in Rockingham County’s Shelter, as well as raise awareness of the “Don’t Judge a Dog by Its Color” campaign.

We want to reach our target market within Rockingham and surrounding counties. Our target market is between the ages of 45 and 70, they are low- income retirees, looking for companionship. This makes them ideal for our mission.

Our objective setting is to promote the new adoption center, receive at least 50% more visitations to the shelter. We want to increase donations by 50%; our “doggie banks” which we will go into detail about later will aid this.

By using the affordability method, budgeting will depend strictly on donations. The shelter is a non-profit organization, so we rely on the hearts and wallets of the community.

Our tools, media, and vehicles we will use are the local news channel, flyers, and the “doggie banks” which will be placed throughout local establishments.

Our message is “Dogs are Color Blind, You Should be Too.” We feel that the Black Dog Syndrome is detrimental to the dog shelter community. We hope that by publicizing this problem, our ultimate goal will be fulfilled.

Our effects will be measurable by checking in once a month at the shelter, to be updated on adoption rates, visits, and donations.

“Dogs are Color Blind, You Should be Too”

Rockingham County Animal Shelter is located in Reidsville, NC. The shelter is located behind the Reidsville Veterinary Hospital and has no working manager. The hospital staff and volunteers spend time giving love and care to the animals. (Rockingham County Animal Shelter, 2009) Shelter hours vary day by day, because it is a non-profit organization. This makes it difficult for families to find time to come out to see the animals.

The shelter consists of one small building. In 2010, Rockingham County plans on opening up a larger facility. (Rockingham County Animal Shelter Website, 2009) This facility will include many things that the current facility does not have. They currently have no separate unit for sick cats and dogs. Also, there is no adequate area for perspective owners to play with the animals.

The current euthanasia rate at the shelter is 80%, but has been as high as 98%. (Rockingham County Animal Shelter Website, 2009) This means that all animals, except a select few are put to sleep. These startling facts are the reason why the shelter highly relies on private donations so the new shelter can be a more long-term facility. The current facility is not even a true animal shelter. It is considered a holding facility. Most animals are only held for 72 hours. (Rockingham County Anima Shelter, 2009) The county has an animal overpopulation problem.

During the year 2010 the facility will be demolished in order to widen the road located beside the facility. (Rockingham County Animal Shelter, 2009) According to the Rockingham County Animal Shelter Website the shelter has raised over \$120,000 in private donations. The shelter already has a few great opportunities for people to donate money. A donor can have their name be a part of a new section of the facility. Also, a person can

donate money and have a paw imprinted on our walkway to honor a certain person.

(Rockingham County Animal Shelter, 2009) This is a good start for the shelter, but the “Don’t Judge a Dog by Its Color” campaign will be able to raise even more money, while at the same time increasing the awareness of black dogs who need homes. The campaign manager of the shelter is a volunteer named Julie Swanner. People may contact her to volunteer or donate to the shelters campaign.

The campaign we are working on is “Don’t Judge a Dog by Its color”. This campaign is based on “Black Dog Syndrome”, which is the condition that people are more likely to buy light colored dogs than black dogs. The campaign is important, because it will change people’s perceptions of black dogs. It is important for people to understand that every dog’s life has value and it does not matter what color dog you own. People who are interested in owning a dog need to know their options besides buying an expensive golden retriever at the pet store.

The shelter will benefit from the campaign in many ways. First of all, black dogs will have the same chance of getting adopted as light colored dogs. Secondly, the shelter will have a smaller euthanasia rate. Lastly, there will be more awareness of the shelter. Since they are a non-profit organization they need more money to be able to take care of the dogs. The campaign will show consumers that all dogs have something to offer and their color has no effect on how much love they can offer a family. After this campaign is over it will accomplish the goal of changing the perception of black dogs, while at the same time bringing more awareness to the shelter.

Target Market

With objectives of reducing euthanasia rates and increasing adoption of black dogs, our marketing plan will mainly focus on targeting older community members living in or near Rockingham County. We intend for our advertising to also reach growing families in this area, but have chosen specifically to revolve our marketing plan around people between the ages of 45 and 70.

The older retirees of Rockingham County over the age of 55 are classified as “Old Milltowns” according to the Prizm Market Segmentation. The average annual income of this group is \$31,271, and the education level of this group is some high school education. This group generally has no children living with them and many are widowed or single. (Nielsen) Approximately 90% of the population of Rockingham County has been living within the county since 1995 according to the 2000 census. (Rockingham County, NC, 2007) This suggests that the majority of the population is highly involved in their subsequent small towns creating a close-knit community, perfect for raising support for our cause.

The older segment of community members fall under the lifestyle group of “Sustaining Seniors” according to Prizm Market Segmentation website describing their lifestyle as low-key and home-centered. The website also suggests that this group shares similar hobbies of watching television, gardening, woodworking, sewing and socializing at veteran’s clubs. (Nielsen) The easy-going and outdoorsy characteristics of this market segment would make it easy to facilitate the adoption of black dogs in greater Rockingham County. Additionally, since this group watches its fair share of television shows, we will be

able to effectively reach them through the use of a commercial that raises awareness of both the Rockingham County Animal Shelter and “Black Dog Syndrome”.

Another segment of the same age range is classified as the “Heartlanders.” This group consists of 45-64 year old empty nesters with an average income of \$44,386. (Nielsen) These couples may already be looking to adopt a dog once their children have moved out and would serve as an easy and plausible target for our marketing efforts.

From researching this market segment, we found Wal-Mart to be the shopping center of choice for the 55 and older age range. We know that there are seven major Wal-Mart stores located in Rockingham County that our targeted audience will frequently shop at in 2010. For this reason, our marketing team intends to strategically place a “doggie collection bank” at the checkout registers of each relevant Wal-Mart in hopes of increasing awareness of our cause and providing an accessible outlet for donations.

The psychographics of these groups of older ladies and gentlemen also help explain why they are our main targets for our marketing plan. We are assuming that these groups of individuals are friendly, community-driven individuals that may have small wallets but big hearts. They prefer rustic, rural living and leisure and are generally conservative minded. Many may have an active community social life but an empty, lonely home life. It is our hope that through our various marketing tools we will be able to effectively reach the older members of the community and not only change their perceptions of black dogs, but also directly increase the adoption rates of black dogs at Rockingham County Animal Shelter in 2010.

Objective Setting

Our student marketing groups' main overall objective is to help the Rockingham County Animal Shelter and Animal Hospital to better achieve a more successful adoption rate of black dogs. With this goal, our group will incorporate the edification that we have learned over the period of time being involved in our integrated marketing communications for apparel and consumer retailing class.

When visiting the Rockingham Animal Shelter, we first noticed the adoption rate is very low of black dogs while the euthanasia rate is almost ninety-eight percent. Our first objective to integrate into our marketing plan is to promote the new adoption center while it is still in production and hopefully receive at least fifty percent more visitations to the shelter before the new shelter is built and gain even more of an audience after the new adoption center is finished.

Our second objective that our group plans on incorporating into our marketing plan is broadening our donation intake by having donation centers at nearby retail environments such as the local bank, hardware and gardening store, or Wal-Mart. We also plan to broaden our donation intake outside of Rockingham County due to the counties low economic standing with our donation centers. Our goal is to increase our donations by fifty percent in order to provide enough incentive to build a new animal shelter, have enough food, blankets, and cleaning supplies for the center.

Our third and final objective for the Rockingham County Animal Shelter and Animal Hospital is to outreach to three large pet retailers such as Wal-Mart and PetsMart. Having larger retailers promoting our chosen shelter of need, the Rockingham Animal Shelter can gain a better informed audience of the high euthanasia rate of their black dogs, donations, as well as more

secure adoptions to help insure that their dogs are put into good homes with knowing that their owners have a love for helping shelter animals.

All of our student marketing groups' objectives will confidently increase the adoption of black dogs, awareness of the Rockingham Animal Shelter, as well as lower the largest problem of them all, the high euthanasia rate.

Budgeting

Our group was not able to contact an administrator of budgeting at the shelter; we can only deduce that our IMC plan will rely on donations. The affordability method will most likely be used in our advertising budget. Our campaign is for a non-profit organization, so our resources rely heavily on private donations.

Our major costs will be production of the commercial, the flyers, and the creating of our "doggie banks." The amount of money that we feel would be necessary to carry out our initial plan's ideas would be no more than \$200. We will ask local businesses for their contribution of materials and design capabilities as their way of donating to our plan and mission.

Tools, Media, and Vehicles to be used

There are a number of different tools used to promote our black dog campaign. The first being flyers, which will read, "Dogs Are Color Blind, Your Should be Too." We will visit local banks, grocery stores, pet stores, parks, and Wal-Mart and put the flyers up. With the flyers our goal is to bring awareness to a wide variety of people. Even if people notice our flyers that are not in our target market they may have friends who are; and they would spread the word to them. Word of mouth is a great form of advertising and we hope that because of the tight-knit community the flyers will be successful.

We are going to have doggie banks located in many of the same places as the flyers. The Rockingham Animal Shelter is trying to build a new facility for the dogs. With the money from the doggie banks they could start building the new facility sooner than expected. We plan on strategically placing these donation boxes where our target market is, not only in Rockingham County but surrounding areas as well.

The third and final way we plan on advertising is by creating a commercial. We will produce the commercial ourselves, as well as acting and editing; this is done to accommodate the small budget. With the commercial we want to bring awareness of the high black dogs euthanasia rate compared to any other dog; also we want the people to become aware of how bad Rockingham shelter is in general.

We have chosen these three different forms of advertising because of our budget. The flyers were cheap to do since we created and printed them at only a few cents per copy. The doggie banks did not cost much. We painted them ourselves and printed the text ourselves. We put our slogan "Dogs are Color Blind, You Should be Too" and beneath that Rockingham County Shelter. The commercial did not cost us anything to make since we did everything ourselves. We were able to borrow a video camera from the film students here at UNC-Greensboro.

The small amount of money that we spent on advertising was worth it. Right now the euthanasia rate is at its all time high, so we are hoping to see a big change with the Rockingham Animal shelter after the community takes notice of our advertising. We were able to bring a great deal of awareness to the people without spending a lot of money.

Messages To Be Used

“Don’t Judge a Dog by It’s Color” is the campaign’s slogan and what we hope to achieve. Our group realized that Rockingham County Shelter is an ideal location to launch this campaign considering that the majority of the dogs available for adoption there are black. Unfortunately for Rockingham their budget is incredibly small and because of this we wanted to create a message that would be powerful enough to make people help us but also simple enough so that even consumers outside our target market would understand our goal, and hopefully want to contribute as well.

Once we determined our target market we wanted to have an easy way that they could contribute. This is where the idea of a “doggie bank” arose. Playing on the idea of a piggy bank our donation collectors would be in the shape of a dog and would read our slogan “Dogs are Color Blind, You Should be Too” and in smaller print below read “Rockingham County Shelter Donations.” we can set up these little coin collectors at the cash registers of local businesses. For example we learned that our target market does shop at Wal-Mart and with the permission of Wal-Mart we would like to put a doggie bank at each register, allowing our market to easily contribute money while they are out spending already. Also would like to have a more personal way that our consumers could contribute. Working with Rockingham’s website we would like to build a page that discusses the plans of the new shelter and breaks each part of the shelter into separate donation areas. This way if a consumer wanted to donate to a specific area of the new shelter, for example the Spay and Neuter Clinic, or the Outside Play Area they could donate money specified to their area of choice. Another option would be to allow the consumer to receive a paw for their

name to be imprinted on which would be added to a walkway into the new shelter. This small walkway is the same idea of the Hollywood Star Boulevard; only instead of stars we would have little paw prints. The last option would be the “Make Your Dog a Star” where the consumer could donate a certain amount of money and for their donation we would post a picture of their dog on the website so that everyone could see the happy possibility that each of the dogs in our shelter has: finding a loving home.

Our target market also visits local establishments like the hardware and gardening store and the veterans’ clubs. To reach our target market there and also give them the chance to donate, we would like to give them the chance to add a paw to the wall. Much like the St. Jude’s Children’s hospital balloons that are always covering the walls of grocery stores, our little colorful dog paws will work the same, and allow our kind-hearted donators to be appreciated. Our little paper paws will be a rainbow colored/tie-dyed, that will read our slogan “Dogs are Color Blind, You Should be Too” and have a place for them to write their name, or they can remain anonymous. This way people who have not yet heard about our campaign will see the paws, and become interested in our campaign and hopefully lead to more donations.

Our commercial will be one of our leading advertisements for our campaign because so much of our target market watches television, and it would allow us to reach many other potential donators too. Our commercial would be shot in black and white, for the obvious reason that color is not important. The five of us all dressed cutely and in black and we would be surrounded by all the dogs available for adoption (or by only the black dogs) and we would all play with them and smile, and look overall happy and positive. While this image is running we could have a voice (one of us) explaining how all of these dogs have

the potential of being part of a family, but it is up to the people in our community to make that a reality and then at the end repeat our slogan “Dogs are Color Blind, Your Should be Too.” Once the slogan has been said we can return to color and freeze the happy image, and read at the bottom of the screen Rockingham’s location and where they can find more information on www.rockinghamcountyshelter.org. We decided that a good channel for this commercial to air on would be News 14 Carolina. It is a local channel, which means that it would reach our target market and other people who may be interested in our campaign. Because it is supporting a local organization we would not be charged much to air our commercial during the news. We would simply have to book in advance to have our commercial shown.

We hope that with our efforts and campaign the word will be spread about the fate of these dogs if the community does not come together and help. Although we want our message to bring hope, it also needs to give a dose of reality to our target market that if they do not help these dogs, they have no chance. With all the different ways that we have made donating available we believe that our campaign for black dogs, and for Rockingham will be successful.

Evaluation

We are going to visit Rockingham’s shelter once to twice a month to check on the progress of our IMC plan. We will track the donations before our plan is put into action, and measure the donations after our plan is put into effect. If we do not see the 50% increase that we are reaching for, an increase in our most effective advertising method will be implemented. We can evaluate the most effective tools by checking in on one focus group a month. This focus group would be no more than 15 people, and would consist of people

within our target market. This would be inexpensive because we would make the group voluntary, and would be conducted by our group or people at the shelter.

Overall Discussion

Our budget is cheap and effective because we use our most abundant resource, the community. Our mission is to raise awareness of the Black Dog Syndrome, and to remedy that affect. It is our hope that through this IMC plan, adoption rates particularly for the black dogs in Rockingham's shelter.

Our plan is the best choice for the non-profit campaign because the target market is a perfect fit and we are reaching them in many ways. Through specific marketing tools (i.e. doggie banks, flyers, commercial) our plan will be an inexpensive but effective way of reaching the community and raising awareness.

Works Cited

1. Nielson. (n.d.). *My Best Segments*. Retrieved November 22, 2009, from Prizm Market Segmentation: <http://www.claritas.com/MyBestSegments/Default.jsp>
2. Rockingham County Animal Shelter. (November 2009). Retrieved from <http://www.rockinghamcountyanimalshelter.org/home.cfm>
3. *Rockingham County, NC*. (2007). Retrieved November 20, 2009, from Epodunk The Power of Place: <http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genInfo.php?locIndex=19603>