



# Strategic Communications Plan Maquoketa Art Experience

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# **Maquoketa Art Experience Final Report**

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## Executive Summary

Established in 2008, Maquoketa Art Experience (MAE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to arts education, arts appreciation, and community engagement through arts. Maquoketa Art Experience is located at the center of Downtown Maquoketa in a facility that hosts workshops, classes, presentations, and performances for individuals of all ages. This facility exposes the community to local and regional artists through exhibitions and workshops. Maquoketa Art Experience engages residents of Maquoketa and the surrounding areas in diverse, creative activities to foster arts appreciation in the community. They offer visual arts exploration through fine art workshops for all skill levels with exhibition space for regional artists and offer community creative space.

After conducting a SWOT analysis, we identified the main issues contributing to a lack of enrollment in Maquoketa Art Experience's children's and adult workshops. We identified target audiences, created message strategies, and formed tactics that will help us reach our main goal of enhancing the relationship between MAE and the residents of Maquoketa. With a limited budget, we created a cost-efficient marketing campaign to be implemented as soon as possible. In addition, we formed a crisis communication plan for Maquoketa Art Experience in cases of emergency. All of these details and more will be expounded upon in the Maquoketa Art Experience final report.

## Organizational Analysis

### Strengths

Maquoketa Art Experience has full support of the community which helps maintain their positive public perception. By residing in the heart of downtown Maquoketa, Maquoketa Art Experience is easily accessible and more visible than if it was located elsewhere. Additionally, their social media presence is strong for a non-profit organization in a small town. They have over 800 likes on Facebook and multiple positive reviews. Maquoketa Art Experience has a well-



organized, easy to navigate website that communicates what is happening within the organization.

### Opportunities

Volunteers at Maquoketa Art Experience are dedicated to helping this organization flourish. They are willing to put in the effort to effectively market this organization to a target audience. Maquoketa Art Experience is able to bring in artists and has the capacity to host various workshops for individuals of all ages. While their social media presence is solely on Facebook, Maquoketa Art Experience has the opportunity to expand to Instagram. Utilizing these free social media sites will allow for little money to be spent on marketing while still reaching a large number of people. One volunteer of Maquoketa Art Experience also owns the local Maquoketa newspaper. She is able to market Maquoketa Art Experience for free in a community-read paper.

### Weaknesses

The physical space of Maquoketa Art Experience is on the smaller side, limiting the ability to hold larger events or galleries with multiple pieces. Maquoketa Art Experience is a non-profit organization run by one paid employee and multiple volunteers. With 70% of their profit going back to the artist and only 30% going to Maquoketa Art Experience, their budget is exceedingly tight. A lack of budget limits communication abilities. Overall, getting individuals in the door and communicating with the community are Maquoketa Art Experiences' two main weaknesses.

### Threats

While the immediate community holds a positive view of Maquoketa Art Experience, many residents of Jackson County are unaware of their presence. The number of people in the vicinity is limited, thus limiting their potential customers. Individuals may not want to travel a far distance to view an art gallery or take a workshop when there might be a similar



opportunity in their own community. In addition, there is another art exhibit located in Maquoketa that may reduce traffic to Maquoketa Art Experience.

### Internal Environment

Maquoketa Art Experience has spent years building up their business and creating a sustainable work environment. Their internal environment can be analyzed by looking at several different aspects of the organization: performance, niche, structure, ethical base, and internal impediments.

The first of these aspects is Maquoketa Art Experience's performance. Maquoketa Art Experience serves the Maquoketa community by offering a space where people of all ages can come together to learn about, share, appreciate, and create art. They hold exhibitions, provide several different classes, help artists sell creations, and sell art supplies to their patrons. The Maquoketa Art Experience retail space was remodeled three years ago. It includes two galleries, a retail space, and a small gift shop. This is an improvement from when the organization was first started in a church basement in 2008. MAE has two Google reviews, both 5 stars, and an overall 4.3/5 star review on Facebook. The managers of Maquoketa Art Experience are very happy with what they have been able to accomplish with the organization. They are very proud of their volunteer staff and the programs they provide.

MAE also has a very important niche in the community. It is the only place in Maquoketa that provides public art classes and helps local artists sell their works. This further solidifies it as an important organization for Maquoketa citizens.

As far as the structure of the public relations operation within the organization is concerned, there is no specific department devoted to public relations. Maquoketa Art Experience is mostly run by volunteers and is looking to expand their public relations and marketing field.



What Maquoketa Art Experience does have is a strong ethical base. They are dedicated to providing all community members with an environment where they feel welcomed and accepted. They want to provide education and entertainment to further expand every patron's cultural understanding of fine arts.

Some internal impediments Maquoketa Art Experience has experienced are funding and staffing issues. The organization is a nonprofit, so they rely heavily on grants, donations, and fundraisers. They only have one full-time employee, everyone else works on a volunteer basis. This means that almost everyone only has a certain amount of time to lend to the organization, and starting up new departments like public relations can be a challenge.

In order to conduct a successful strategic communication campaign, Maquoketa Art Experience will have to draw on the things that have already helped it grow in the past eight years. The organization has a number of dedicated volunteers it can use to spread the word about the classes and exhibits it provides. MAE has also developed a relationship with the University of Iowa which it can use to share resources and promote its business. Maquoketa is a town that is all about art. The downtown district, Maquoketa Caves, and Codfish Hollow concert venue are all attractions that Maquoketa Art Experience can benefit from. Finally, Maquoketa Art Experience's policies of openness and community make it the ideal place to explore art and connect with other people.

### **Public Perception**

Maquoketa Art Experience is not well known by people outside of the town, however they have an overall positive reputation. People who visit, love Maquoketa Art Experience and show support for the business by liking their Facebook page and following their website. Despite the small group of people who regularly interact with Maquoketa Art Experience, they do not have a large following. People seem to be intimidated by art. Either they think they do not like art or they do not know anything about it. That mindset deters people from visiting. Maquoketa Art Experience would like to continue to build their reputation as a place for





everyone. As MAE representative Nancy Kilburg put it, Maquoketa Art Experience is for “everyone with a heartbeat.” Our hope is to grow a larger following for Maquoketa Art Experience by expanding their social media presence and by creating a campaign that will emphasize the point that Maquoketa Art Experience is truly a place everyone can enjoy. By creating a stronger social media presence and campaign we hope to reach not only people in Maquoketa, but also people in the surrounding areas (Cedar Rapids, Anamosa, and Dubuque).

### **External Environment**

In general, the overall art industry is a smaller competitive market due to the high-class, superior stigma that is associated with art. Not many feel that they are elite enough to enjoy art and what it has to offer. Maquoketa Art Experience battles with these stereotypes every day, trying to find new ways to compete with the myths about art. More specifically, Maquoketa Art Experience competitors are the Ohnward Fine Arts Center, Old City Hall Gallery, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, Dubuque Museum of Art and Bellevue Iowa Arts Council. Maquoketa Art Experience differentiates itself from their competitors by offering a variety of art classes, creating a supportive art community, utilizing their relationship with the University of Iowa, and having the space to accommodate a diverse range of art programs.

The Maquoketa Art Experience is located in the heart of downtown Maquoketa which helps them attract their supporters. The most common supporters typically come from donations, grants and fundraisers. Furthermore, they do receive help from one particular donor if Maquoketa Art Experience is struggling. They hope to get into the position where they can start receiving revenue from merchandise and art work.

### **Situational Analysis**

As a non-profit organization located in a small town, the main challenge the Maquoketa Art Experience faces is trying to get people to come through their doors. The organization has a wonderful mission of sharing art with guests in the area, however the struggle is to



communicate with the public everything the organization has to offer. Once there is a solid level of communication with the intended audience, the organization will be able to thrive.

When analyzing this organization, there are multiple reasons as to why they face communication barriers. Maquoketa Art Experience is volunteer driven with no large funding source. The operation budget is strictly from private funding. With a tight budget, the organization has limited to no funding opportunities for marketing. Additionally, with a staff of volunteers, there is no specific individual who is in charge of marketing and communications. If the organization were to get into the business of selling art, staff would be able to establish a larger operational budget that would allow for a marketing fund.

Furthermore, the organization has been unable to get the message across that art is for everyone who has a heartbeat. People in today's society are terrified of being embarrassed. If one does not believe they will be successful at an activity, they are hesitant to even consider trying. This same concept can be applied to art. People who have the fear of being non-proficient at art will not want to come through the doors of Maquoketa Art Experience. Adult workshops have been cancelled due to no one showing up. If the organization is able to communicate with the public that doors are open to everyone, there may be a rise in participants. The need to clearly communicate that art is for people of all ages and skill levels is a must for MAE.

Lastly, the organization does not have the capacity to monitor and successfully run multiple social media channels. At this time, the organization has a Facebook page that is used sparingly. We believe that the organization needs to have a single volunteer to monitor the Facebook page. Likewise, the organization needs to establish an Instagram account with one volunteer managing the social media outlet. Instagram has a growing popularity for people of all ages. Not only would the target audience be a wide span of individuals, but capturing art pieces through photography would draw people to come visit the exhibit. Overall, these two



social media platforms are free to use and are something that could help further the communication with several audiences if volunteers are designed to operate the channel.

### Identify Publics

Maquoketa Art Experience has several publics that it must turn its attention toward when the situation calls for it. The people who engage with their programs and take classes with the organization are their customers. The volunteers and artists who run those programs and classes are their producers. Other organizations that compete for the same patrons, like the Ohnward Fine Arts Center, are their limiters. Newspapers that cover special events and spread the word about Maquoketa Art Experience are enablers. All of these groups are important and need to be considered when running an organization, but Maquoketa Art Experience's key public is the one they should focus on when thinking about strategic communication campaigns.

The key public for Maquoketa Art Experience is parents of young children (ages 5-12) in the surrounding area. The parents are the most important audience for Maquoketa Art Experience to focus on because they have the ability to enroll themselves and their children in art programs. Maquoketa Art Experience needs to find a way to appeal to these parents and convince them that their children would benefit greatly from art classes since there are so many open to younger kids. Then, if their children are having a good time at Maquoketa Art Experience, more parents may sign up for adult art classes, which are lacking in attendance. Those parents may then encourage their friends and their friends' families to visit Maquoketa Art Experience as well. The bringing together of families over art further emphasizes the message of openness and community Maquoketa Art Experience is trying to put forth. This is why parents are such an important public to target.

### Target Personas

Mid 30s-early 40s, Mom



- She is married with two kids in third and fifth grade. She is classified as a middle class. She teaches fourth grade. She is always looking for new ways to inspire creativity for her children and students. She enjoys gardening, being involved with the community, and resides in Maquoketa.

20s, male

- Young aspiring artist looking to get his art work recognized. He has a low income, who is going to school full time at the University of Iowa. His undergraduate degree is Art History. On the weekends he writes poetry, and hangs at local coffee shops for inspiration.

Late 60s- early 70s, retired women

- She is a widow and grandma to eight young children. She receives a hefty pension, so she is able to spend more on fancy art classes. She loves theater, knitting, painting and sculpting. She wants her grandchildren to take up art classes. She is always looking for new things to participate in. She resides in Dubuque.

## Research Report and Findings

### Information Received

Our research findings have influenced the way we went about marketing Maquoketa Art Experience. For example, we were able to get an idea of what people were willing to pay for a workshop, who MAE's target was, and how we should market MAE to those people. One thing we looked at was pricing for 'MAE's workshops. That information helped us make recommendations for suggested workshop prices. Our research showed that a majority of people who took the survey were willing to spend \$20-\$25 for a kids workshop. For adult classes, our survey revealed that 45% of people would pay \$55-\$65 for a three hour workshop. MAE's prices are pretty much in line with what people were willing to spend. MAE could potentially raise their prices on children's classes by a few dollars. Currently MAE offers children's classes in the \$5-\$15 range.



Our survey and interview results also reinforced who we thought our key public was, which is families with kids. Our research showed that 44% of the survey takers were married and the next largest group at 25% was married with children. This inspired our strategies and tactics to target families in the area. The income levels were mixed with a large group making \$40,000-\$59,000 followed by \$100,000 plus. The people who took our survey were already following MAE on Facebook which could explain the high awareness rate at 97% and the mixed income level results. Additionally, a majority of the people surveyed identified as being in the age range of 55-65. MAE can take advantage of marketing to those people in that age range since they will likely have children or grandchildren. MAE can be a great place for those individuals to get their grandchildren involved in art classes. Since MAE has a large Facebook following and awareness through social media, we suggest the MAE take advantage of posting more content on Facebook, boosting a post, and also creating an Instagram account.

### **Grant Wood Loop**

The Grant Wood Loop encompasses Dubuque, Jackson, and Jones Counties. The loop is a set of destinations and experiences that offer people art, culture, nature, and dining. It gives residents and visitors the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and visit neighboring cities. After doing some research, we found that the city of Maquoketa was listed as one of the destinations on the loop. Specifically, destinations like the Joinerville Boulders and Iowa Grape Vines Winery. On the Grant Wood Loop website, Maquoketa Art Experience was listed under attractions. In addition to the Grant Wood Loop website, they also have a Facebook page. Even though MAE is listed as an attraction on their webpage, they could greatly benefit from forging a relationship with the Grant Wood Loop organization. In doing this, the Grant Wood Loop could feature posts, pictures, and events for MAE on their Facebook page. This would increase MAE's outreach and awareness.

### **Strategy**



## Goals and Objectives

We have created three different goals for Maquoketa Art Experience. The first and main goal is our relationship management goal: enhance the relationship between MAE and the residents of Maquoketa. Our second goal is our reputation management goal: establish MAE as the leading center for the enjoyment of the arts in the Maquoketa area. Our third goal is our task management goal: increase public support for the appreciation of the arts by residents of Maquoketa.

We decided to make our relationship management goal our main goal because MAE is a nonprofit organization that thrives on public support. It was created to allow community members to come into a space to participate in and appreciate art. MAE prides itself in being a place that is open to everyone. They want to make sure that everyone feels welcome and valued. MAE operates on donations as well as revenue from their art classes and gift shop. Fostering that relationship between MAE and Maquoketa residents is the most critical part of our strategic communications campaign. That being said, we have developed several objectives to help MAE determine if they have met this goal.

Our awareness objective is to increase awareness amongst families in Maquoketa with young children by five percent by September 1, 2017. In our first organizational and situational audit, we identified parents of young children as our key public because they have the ability to enroll their children and themselves in MAE art classes. The more people that know about MAE and the services they offer, the more potential patrons MAE has. Our campaign has MAE connecting with local elementary schools before the end of the 2016-2017 school year and at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. We will have flyers being posted around Maquoketa advertising art classes for kids. We also will have MAE create an Instagram account in addition to their Facebook page. These tactics will inform parents about MAE. We figure that a five percent increase in awareness in four months is something that MAE can achieve with all of the tactics we are providing them with.



We also have created two action objectives. The first is to increase enrollment in child art classes by seven percent by May of 2018. We believe that our campaign will result in a greater number of parents enrolling their children in the classes that MAE has to offer. Seeing an increase in enrollment is a great way to indicate to MAE that the campaign is working. We decided that a seven percent increase in a year will allow for enough time for more people to discover, visit, and patronize MAE. Greater enrollment leads to more revenue coming in as well as more kids being able to explore art at a young age. As they grow older, they may continue to take classes and develop a life-long appreciation for the arts. They can encourage their friends and family members to take classes as well.

Our second action objective is to increase donations by five percent by May of 2018. If more people are introduced to MAE and learn about their mission, we believe many of them will be encouraged to donate. People donate to organizations and causes that they support. Our goal is to enhance the relationship between MAE and residents of Maquoketa. If they are truly able to create and maintain lasting, positive relationships with a greater number of people in the community, they should expect to see an influx in donations. This is a very important aspect of the relationship building process because, as we have discussed, donations allow MAE to bring in artists, create exhibits, run classes, and share art with the community. Again, we decided that a five percent increase after a full year of campaigning will be an obtainable objective for MAE.

### **Action Strategies**

There are several strategies in which Maquoketa Art Experience can benefit from in order to reach their target publics. We have generated action strategies that can be broken down in to the proactive category. Based on our research and findings, Maquoketa Art Experience has a wide range of strategies to implement in the upcoming years. The following describes each strategy along with a description of the benefits.

#### **Proactive Strategies**



Proactive strategies will enable Maquoketa Art Experience to launch programs based on interests. We believe that utilizing organizational performance, audience engagement, special events, and a combination of alliance and sponsorship will help the organization.

## Organizational Performance

Organizational performance includes making changes to help create harmony with key publics. After our survey and discussion of findings, we found that individuals would like to see some changes within the organization. People noted in the survey what amount of money they would be willing to pay for a three-hour adult workshop as well as a ninety-minute youth workshop. Currently, individuals who attend an adult workshop are paying \$50, whereas youth who attend an hour and a half workshop are paying \$25 roughly. Based on results, the second highest response answer for cost was to have an adult workshop cost under \$50 and the youth workshop to cost \$10 - \$15 give or take. By Maquoketa Art Experience lowering prices at a minimum of \$10, there would be a higher chance of individuals coming through the doors of Maquoketa Art Experience.

### 1. Audience Engagement

A two-way communication tactic that engages audiences and publics in community activities defines audience engagement. We believe that one idea for Maquoketa Art Experience to implement would be the use of Instagram. Through the use of Instagram, the audience would be able to participate in the organization without physically being on site. This strategy will bring members into the organization, as people will share, comment, and like pictures or videos posted on Instagram. Additionally, being an art based facility, Maquoketa Art Experience will be able to showcase amazing pieces of work to viewers. Additionally, in this social media channel, the number of followers and follows will increase brand awareness.





Another way to execute audience engagement would be for a staff member to post survey polls or questions on the social media channels of Maquoketa Art Experience. Facebook could be of use in this situation for determining what type of class people would like to see offered that week as well as what time would work best for most individual's schedules. The fact that Maquoketa Art Experience would be asking for audience input and implementing comments or reactions could really boost trust, donors, and strategy of classes for the organization.

Lastly, one other component of audience engagement includes a triggering event. We think it would be wise for Maquoketa Art Experience to hold a triggering event in conjunction with a local attraction that is taking place. This may include a "Salute To Summer" at the end of May for local schools to have a field trip, a "Country Classic" paint-a-thon when the Great Jones County Fair occurs, or "Classic Canvas" when the Maquoketa Caves hold a special event. By hosting a triggering event, a new audience will be exposed to all that Maquoketa Art Experience has to offer.

## 2. Alliance & Coalition

The terms alliance and coalition include where two or more organizations join together in a partnership with other groups who share similar values. This type of compounded relationship can help meet goals and objectives for Maquoketa Art Experience. We believe that if Maquoketa Art Experience were to partner with the Cedar Rapids Art Museum in "Summer Of The Arts" in Iowa City, new clientele would be reached.

The above is simply an example, for the organization could partner with a wide variety of other art non-profits. After researching, there are several art organizations in the Dubuque area



that could be utilized. Overall, the partnership with a new organization will allow for Maquoketa Art Experience's demographic of participants to be exposed to a different art organization. On the contrary, Maquoketa Art Experience's partner's organization's demographic will be exposed to Maquoketa Art Experience. Not only Maquoketa Art Experience be in front of their new partner's clientele, but the organization will also be in front of new people at a specific event.

### 3. Sponsorship

Sponsorship entails providing financial, programming, personnel, or other resource support to a related organization. Through this proactive strategy, Maquoketa Art Experience could reach out to another new audience. We know the budget is tight, therefore, we suggest that staff members reach out to local businesses to gain understanding of how sponsorship works for their company. Once general information on sponsorships is understood, we believe Maquoketa Art Experience could incorporate sponsorships into recreational sports teams or weddings. Weddings would be a unique way to reach audience for Maquoketa Art Experience could sponsor the artwork or décor at the wedding, reception, or rehearsal dinner.

We believe these strategies will be of utmost importance and utilization of resources, as the organization staff expands the reach of new publics.

### Message Strategies

For this campaign, we chose to articulate the benefits of art exposure on individuals, specifically on children, and the community as a whole. Maquoketa Art Experience aims to awaken a spirit of creativity in everyone who enters their doors. Research shows that the arts benefit individuals and communities. Art programs "encourage cognitive development, increase



creativity, improve self-esteem, and promote better health” in individuals (Community Arts Education Today). While art not only positively influences the individual, it also has lasting impacts on the development of a community. Research shows that “arts education programs can build social capital, advance economic growth, and generate a sense of shared culture and community belonging” (Community Arts Education Today). To actively engage the target audience, MAE will use a love and rational appeal message strategy.

The first message strategy we will use is a love appeal. We will focus on the idea that art brings people together, improving social connections between any participants. Art classes and workshops can act as a bonding opportunity for families, friends, and coworkers. Our marketing strategy will promote MAE as a central gathering place in the Maquoketa community. MAE’s location in the heart of Downtown Maquoketa is beneficial for this strategy because it is easily accessible for families in the area. We will place an emphasis on the idea that art brings people, especially families, together. Creating artwork acts enhances social skills between children and their peers, teachers, and parents.

The second message strategy we will implement is a rational appeal. For this message strategy, we will focus on the positive impact art has on the develop brain of a child. During the brains early years, neural connections are made at a rapid rate (How Art Develops the Young Brain). Activities, like painting, building, and molding, stimulate neural senses and wire the brain for successful learning throughout one’s life. Art in not only expressive, it is also cognitive. Even at an early age, art helps individuals develop essential thinking and perspective-taking skills by taking a mental representation, either observed or imagined, and translating it to a physical piece of work (How Art Develops the Young Brain). In addition, movement during art develops motor skills in the hands. Overall, art has a positive impact art has on the develop brain of a child.

These strategies will be effective in reaching parents because they target the both the emotional and rational side of the brain. Using a love appeal is effective when it deals with families because it touches at the hearts of parents who are looking for ways to bond with their child. The rational appeal is effective because parents are constantly looking for ways to make



their children learn better and faster so they will be successful later in life. These strategies appeal to parents both on a logical and emotional side, and therefore will be the most effective.

## Tactics

In order to engage the Maquoketa community and surrounding areas, we have developed a couple of tactics that MAE can utilize to increase the awareness for their specific demographic. The four main tactics that we will address are organizational media, advertising, news media and interpersonal communication.

The first tactic that we want to stress the most is organizational media. This type of media will be published by MAE therefore, MAE has total control of what their message is and what is being told to consumers. This specific tactic is high impact and is useful for info-seeking publics. This aligns perfectly with MAE's target demographic as they are people who constantly want to know more information quickly. The two ways we want to accomplish this tactic is the use of social media and creating take-home flyers for students in surrounding schools.

We first suggest using social media aggressively. That is where everyone flocks to, and it is important that MAE experiences the social media movement with their consumers. The two social media platforms that we highly recommend are Facebook and Instagram. The MAE Facebook page has a fantastic following with over 850 likes. We encourage MAE to begin posting more content that is informative, engaging and what consumers want to know about MAE. We also suggest creating an Instagram for MAE. Instagram was made for art. This is an important platform that can show followers what type of art MAE provides. By posting captivating pictures, the photos itself will sell the organization. After all, a picture says a thousand words. To help with this, we have created a one month social media calendar with examples of when to post and what kind of content to create. This will help generate ideas, stay on track so no one forgets to post and enhance the relationship with MAE current and new followers. Look for the content calendar at the end of the tactics section.



Our second suggestion for organizational media is to distribute a take-home flyer for students in surrounding schools to promote MAE children art classes. Since majority of children are probably not as active on social media as adults, we needed to find a way to reach that demographic and inspire them to participate in the art culture. Our idea is that by creating a flyer specifically designed for a child, distributed at their school, this will gain the child's attention. Those that are interested in the classes, can bring the flyer home and tell their parents about the opportunity. This will increase the attendance in children classes and potentially adult classes as parents also may sign-up once they learn more information about MAE. An example of a flyer that would be distributed in the children's mail boxes at school is at the end of the tactics section.

The second and third tactic that we recommend are a mix of advertising and news media. By using these tactics, this will reach a large and diverse audience which ultimately increases the chances for MAE overall awareness. We are conscious that MAE has a tight and constricted budget, so they are not able to spend a ton on advertising. However, according to Nancy Kilburg, one volunteer of MAE owns the local Maquoketa newspaper and has connections to the local radio station. This is a fantastic resource to take advantage of. We suggest creating press releases about when a new artist will be featured or about an event that is taking place at MAE. Maybe even write an article about the different classes that MAE has for the week and/or month with the prices and information detailing the experience. We also suggest creating 30 second radio advertisements discussing MAE and the opportunities that they have for the people of Maquoketa.

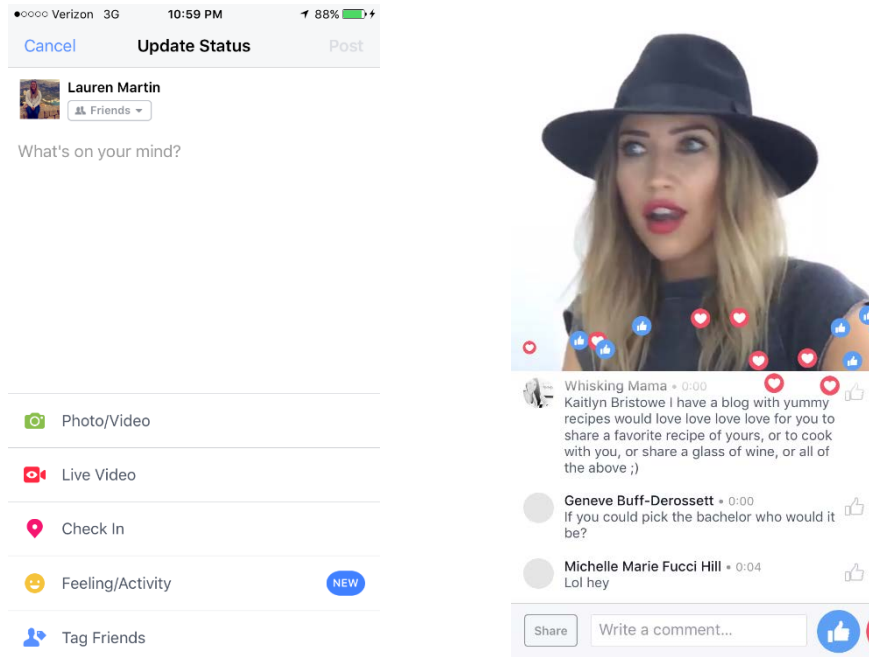
### Radio Advertisement Example

**20 second Slug:** Maquoketa Art Experience wants to help the art community in any way they can. Every fourth Thursday of the month from 1-4, MAE welcomes you with open arms to bring your own art projects and work on them in their open studio. MAE will provide easels,

computers, and drop cloths. The best part? It's FREE. We have the space, you bring the art. See you there.

The final tactic that MAE should focus on is interpersonal communication. This type of communication is face-to-face and enables personal interaction. It is also cost-effective which is perfect for MAE due to the tight budget. In order for the community to get to know MAE and the services they provide, we suggest they host more open houses or tours to welcome people to the facility. These open houses can be on a weekend where the community can walk around the facility, view art work, and mingle with the artists and volunteers. Another way to give a tour and interact with consumers would be a Facebook LIVE video. During the event, you can go LIVE and show MAE followers what the event is about, to engage with the audience and inspire them to attend next time.

**An example of what a Facebook LIVE video looks like is below:**





Content Calendar Example:

# October

2018

## Maquoketa Art Experience Content Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 #ArtistAppreciation Facebook post @9:00 a.m.	2 #MAEMonday Informative Facebook post @8:30 a.m.	3 #InstaArt Picture of featured art on Instagram	4	5 #TBT post about an art class in past that was a lot of fun! @ noon	6 #FunArtFriday post on Facebook and Instagram @ 10:00 a.m.	7
8	9 #MAEMonday Informative Facebook post @8:30 a.m.	10 #InstaArt Picture of featured art on Instagram	11 What Inspires you? Engage with audience on Facebook @	12	13 #FunArtFriday post on Facebook and Instagram @	14 #SaturdaySpotlight Facebook LIVE event
15	16 #MAEMonday Informative Facebook post @8:30 a.m.	17 #InstaArt Picture of featured art on Instagram	18	19 #TBT post about an artist that visited MAE! @ noon	20 #FunArtFriday post on Facebook and Instagram @	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28



	#MAEMonday Informative Facebook post @8:30 a.m.	#InstaArt Picture of featured art on Instagram	Who is your favorite artist? Engage with audience on Facebook @		#FunArtFriday post on Facebook and Instagram @ 10:00 a.m.	
29	30	31				
	#MAEMonday Informative Facebook post @8:30 a.m.	Happy Halloween Facebook Post @ 10:00 a.m.				

### MAE Hashtags and Posting Tips!

#ArtistAppreciation: On the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month appreciate a new artist at MAE

#MAEMonday: Inform audience of fun events, classes, artists that will be at MAE for the week

#InstaArt: Once a week post on Instagram a picture of featured art

#FunArtFriday: Interact with followers. Ask them to send in their fun art, and it will be featured on Instagram/Facebook the following Friday. Each Friday you will have one new art photo to post.

#SaturdaySpotlight: When an artist is at MAE, you have an open house, or a fun event planned, Facebook LIVE and show your audience what is happening at MAE.

Engaging posts: What inspires you? Ask questions that engage with audience so they can comment and start a conversation.

Utilize popular hashtags → SelfieSunday, TBT, TransformationTuesday etc. when necessary

Tips: Space Instagram posts out. If you post Tuesday, wait to post until Friday or Saturday.

Posting 4/5 times a week is efficient. Not too much but still enough that you are present and engaging with audience.

### Important dates to post



New Year 1/1/2017 @ 8:00 a.m.

National Inspire your heart with art day 1/31/2017 @10:00 a.m.

Valentine's Day 2/14/2017 @ 7:00 p.m.

National Children's Day (JUNE TBA) @ 10:00 a.m.

Fourth of July 7/4/2017 @ 10:00 a.m.

Make a Difference Day 10/7/2017 @ 10:00 a.m.

Halloween 10/31/2017 @10:00 a.m. \*what are your children being for Halloween?

Thanksgiving 11/23/2017 @ 10:00 a.m.

Happy Holidays 12/1/2017 @ 10:00 a.m. \*Allows for openness & accepting of all religions

**Post if:**

- Receive an award
- Feature new artist/ New art pieces
- Fundraisers/ Donations
- Informative post!!! → Class registration, special event, new classes offered, artist is coming etc.

**Example of an Instagram and Facebook post:**

- This is an example of the Tuesday #InstaArt hashtag.



- Below is an example of an engaging Facebook post.



## **WHEN**

**July 5<sup>th</sup> – July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
9am – 12pm**

## **WHERE**

**Maquoketa Art  
Experience**

**124 S. Main St., Maquoketa, IA**

**[HTTP://MAQUOKETA-ART.ORG/YOUTH-WORKSHOPS/](http://MAQUOKETA-ART.ORG/YOUTH-WORKSHOPS/)**

**KIDS ENTERING  
1<sup>ST</sup> – 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**LOVE BUILDING  
WITH LEGO  
BRICKS?**

**Camp includes:**

- **Model building**
- **Challenges**
- **Creative collective projects**

**B4K ENGINEERS:  
GAMERS BRICK  
ADVENTURES**

**Bring classic arcade  
games like**

- **PacMan**
- **Super Mario Bros**
- **Pokemon**

**To LIFE using LEGOS.**



## Budget and Implementation

### Timeline

Our suggested timeline would depend on the money and resources that Maquoketa Art Experience has available. We would like MAE to prepare for their campaign and start the launch of their marketing tactics by the start of June. The launch would start with MAE creating an Instagram account and working towards posting a boosted Facebook ad. In addition, budgeting for a boosted post would increase their public exposure. Summer workshops at MAE are one of their most popular services. Since summer is approaching it would be a good time to reach out to potential customers. Through use of social media and open houses, they can encourage people to check out all the great activities MAE has to offer. MAE can use social media, like Facebook Live, to their advantage in order to show off their summer art collections. Lastly, creating an Instagram page would allow people to see what art or artists are being featured at MAE. People tend to respond positively to visuals, so posting images of workshops and other activities can help MAE increase awareness, engagement, and attendance. This will be the first step followed by creating a take-home flyer for local elementary school children.

The benefit of launching their campaign in June would mean that they can start increasing their awareness through social media, and take-home flyers would get distributed to the local elementary schools before the children go on summer vacation. This would allow the children and their families to see what events and workshops are being offered over the summer. The flyers would have a dual purpose in inspiring parents to look into MAE and find workshops that they too are interested in taking.

If by June MAE cannot afford to purchase marketing materials or boost a post, they can still make an impact by starting an Instagram account. MAE also has the ability to increase the number of posts they put on Facebook. Social media is free and can be implemented immediately.



Launching a campaign in June may be challenging for MAE because they may not have the money to spend on a campaign. In addition, they only have one full-time employee. Although June seems like a great time to fully launch a campaign they may have to hold off on some of the promotional materials until late August or early September. Having the summer to prepare their marketing materials could be beneficial. Additional time will give MAE time to raise money for the costs of producing marketing materials. If they choose to launch in the late summer or early fall, they would still be able to target school children and their parents once classes reconvene. They can produce fall flyers for children to highlight upcoming events.

After their initial launch, MAE could send out marketing materials seasonally. For example, in the winter, spring, and summer. MAE could provide flyers for the local elementary school children before every school break. Again, this would help MAE target families of the children and encourage them to check out their upcoming workshops. This will also give the families ideas of how they can entertain their children when they are not in school. When MAE increases attendance from their initial campaign launch, they will likely have the funds to keep up this proactive marketing campaign. The boosted Facebook ads will be up to Nancy and the rest of the MAE team to handle.

Since this tactic is cost effective, they could do this as frequently as once a month or once every couple of months; depending on what they feel is most compatible with their budget. MAE does not need to do a boosted ad all that often, however, it would be in MAE's best interest to post consistently on Facebook and Instagram. For example, a Facebook post three times a week and an Instagram post once a week (see social media calendar). An optional marketing material would be an informational brochure of MAE. As mentioned earlier, MAE is a featured attraction on the Grant Wood Loop. They could have brochures made and distributed to other local attractions; The Decker Hotel, Grape Vines Winery, and the Joinerville Boulders information center. The brochures would require a larger budget, so this could be launched a year from now.

Maquoketa Art Experience has connections with the local newspaper and radio station.



As of now they are able to take advantage of placing ads in the paper and radio. This costs MAE virtually no money so they should continue to use their network at that media outlet and produce content for those platforms (see example radio advertisement). Placing advertisements in the newspaper and on the radio is a budget friendly way to increase awareness.

### **Maintenance of the Campaign**

The maintenance of the campaign would be Nancy Kilburg's responsibility since she is the only paid full-time employee. Nancy will be in charge of ordering printed materials, contacting the local schools, sending emails, and posting information to social media accounts. Since Nancy already has connections to Maquoketa's local newspaper and radio station she would continue to reach out to those media outlets. We realize that the marketing campaign is a significant amount of work for one person. We suggest MAE hire an unpaid intern. MAE has a connection to The University of Iowa and Clinton Community College; they could offer an internship to an art, marketing, journalism, or communications student. Even though MAE does not have a budget to pay for an internship at the moment, they can offer valuable work experience. Most students take unpaid internships so it will be easy to find someone to fill the position. An added bonus would be that a student could likely use MAE's internship for college credit.

Since the internship will be unpaid, they could start off by offering a summer internship program where students could work from Iowa City and produce marketing materials to be sent to Nancy; posting remotely from Iowa City to MAE's social media accounts. Nancy can hire someone who can effectively communicate through email, Skype, and by phone. If it is difficult to find a college student for the summer, they can reach out to high school seniors in the area (Maquoketa, Dubuque, Cedar Rapids, Davenport) who are looking for an early internship and work experience. If they live in town they could come into MAE on a weekly basis to work with Nancy in person. If that student lives further away, they could meet on a monthly basis. MAE has several options they can pursue for interns. Even a young adult in the area may have an



interest in working with MAE. In the future, as MAE increases revenue, they may be able to hire a part-time employee or be able to pay an intern. It would be the most cost effective to pay an employee by the hour versus having to hire and pay a another full-time employee salary.

### **Budget and Expenditures**

Maquoketa Art Experience expressed that they would like to spend little to no money on a marketing campaign due to their tight budget. Most of the marketing materials we recommend will require a small marketing budget. If they can start small and inexpensive with their marketing they will be able to increase awareness, attendance, and therefore, revenue. The more revenue they bring in, the more money they will be able to put back into marketing. Most of the marketing tactics will be relatively inexpensive. Launching an Instagram account would be free and allow them to create a larger following. If they want to take it a step further, they can boost posts or ads on Facebook. MAE can decide the dollar amount they would like to allocate to this plan. We do not suggest MAE spend a lot of money on boosted posts, but for only ten dollars they could make a big impact on social media. If MAE gains more followers on Facebook or other social media platforms as a result of their boosted ad, they could try to boost ads or posts more often in the future. In terms of printing material, the cost would depend on how many flyers they decide to distribute along with the size, paper choice, and the design layout of the flyers. To start this process, MAE should first reach out to a single elementary school and target only one or two grades of students; this will be more cost effective that sending a flyer to each individual kid in the school. For instance, the could contact Briggs Elementary School in Maquoketa and distribute flyers to every student in that school's 3rd grade class. From there, they are automatically targeting more children and families than they have in the past. This tactic will eventually help MAE gage how successful their flyer was by tracking leads. In the future MAE can increase the number of flyers they send home with children.

As for the cost of distributing flyers, we received several estimates for printed materials. A single-sided flyer with colored ink would cost anywhere from \$39-\$55 for 100 copies. At



Copyworks in Dubuque, MAE can receive 100 copies for \$39.00 and at Vistaprint they can have the same amount printed and delivered for \$45.00. Having printed material shipped and delivered will cost more than in store pickup. It may, however, be worth the extra cost and be more time effective to have the prints delivered rather than having Nancy or a volunteer drive to Dubuque to pick up an order. Additionally, to save more money, MAE should design their own flyer like the example one we have provided. Having a copy center or graphic designer custom make one would be significantly more expensive. Places like Vistaprint, Staples, and Shutterfly have a wide selection of user friendly templates for MAE to create their perfect take-home flyer.

As reported in our research findings, an optional marketing material MAE could utilize is creating brochures. MAE can distribute informational brochures to local destinations on the Grant Wood Loop. Brochures will cost anywhere from \$75-\$95 for 100 copies, again, depending on the style, paper, and shipping. For budgeting purposes, we have included example flyers and brochures to show the average cost for these printed materials.

As mentioned in the tactics section. We suggested that Maquoketa Art Experience hold open house events. This would be a great way to get people into their facility. An open house would cost next to nothing. They could post invites on Facebook or send out email invitations for free. The only cost associated with an open house would be the potential for food and drink costs. Even then, Nancy and the MAE volunteers can decide if that is something they want to provide.

After Maquoketa Art Experience launches their campaign they can evaluate the success of their marketing strategies and tactics. Once MAE gains a better understanding of how successful their campaign was they can adjust their budget accordingly. Evaluation of their marketing campaign costs no money since they can physically track enrollment numbers, Facebook follows, analytics, and other forms of customer engagement. The more revenue they can bring in, the more money they may be able to allocate towards their marketing budget. MAE should see what marketing tools work for them and continue to use those platforms in the



future (see evaluation plan).

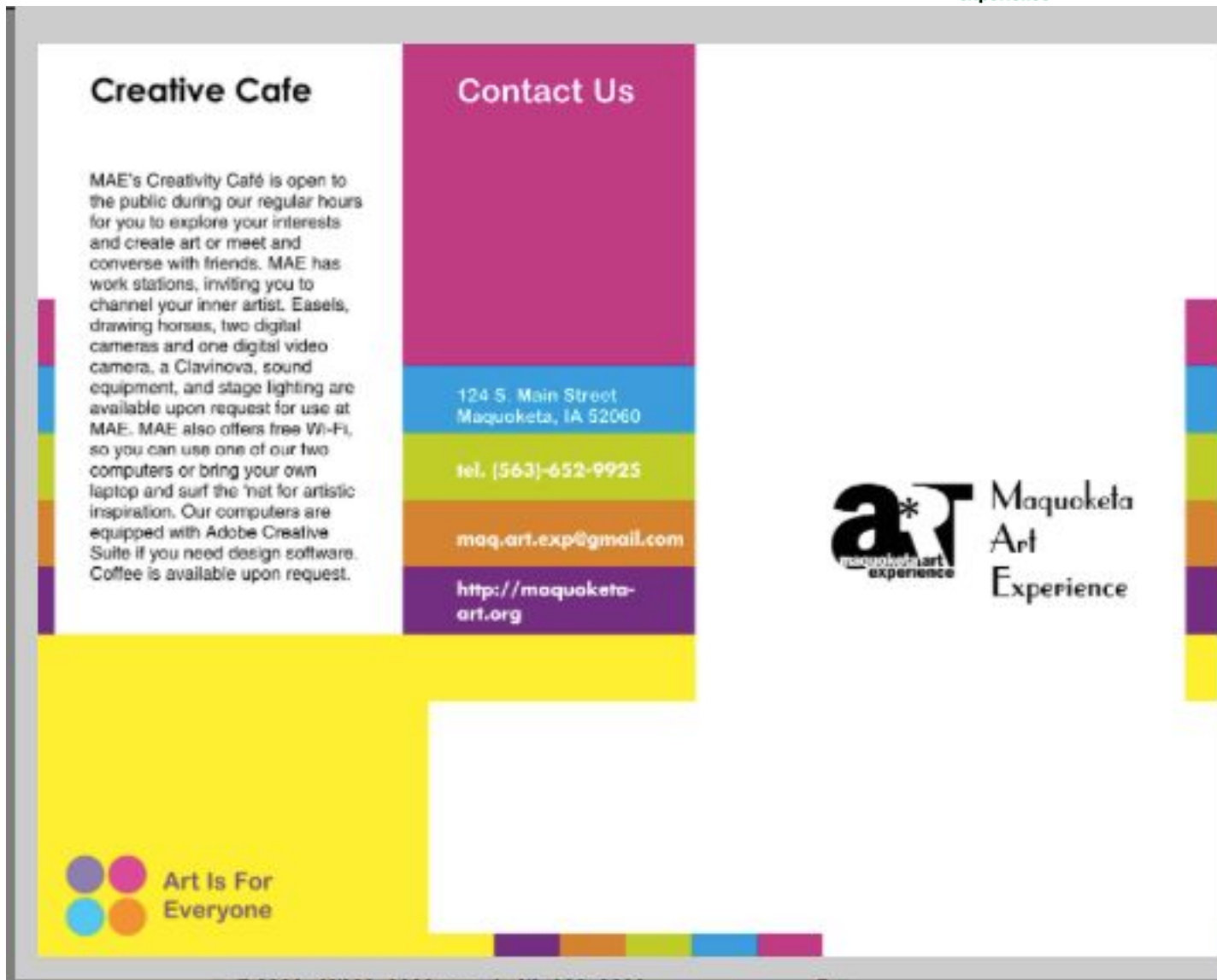
**Example Flyer: created on Vistaprint**

Vistaprint: \$45.00 + (\$7.99) shipping for 100 color copies Copyworks Dubuque: \$39.00 (in store pick up) for 100 color copies

**Example Brochure: created at Staples Copy Center**







Vistaprint: \$84.00 + (\$7.99) shipping for 100 color copies Staples: \$79.99 (free shipping) for 100 copies.

## Evaluation

There are several ways that MAE will be able to evaluate the level of success of our strategic communication plan. We made sure that all three of our objectives included measurable outcomes and realistic timelines. Simple tools can be used in order to obtain the measurements and data.

First we have our awareness objective: to increase awareness amongst families in Maquoketa with young children by five percent by September 1, 2017. It is important that MAE take note of their statistics immediately before they launch our campaign. Google Analytics can be used to track website traffic information. They should keep a log of how many site visits they get in a day, what elements of the site receive the most traffic, and what times during the day are the most popular. They should also be sure to record the results of our Google Survey, paying specific attention to the number of parents who participated (36% of respondents reported they were parents). They need to keep track of how many likes and members they have on their Facebook page as well. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 MAE should review their website traffic information, Facebook page activity, and send out the survey again on the same platforms. The website and Facebook page data will be able to tell MAE if they have increased the overall awareness of the public in general. The survey will let them know exactly how many parents now know about MAE. They will be able to compare the results to the results of the first survey. It will immediately be clear if the five percent increase has been achieved.

Our first action objective is to increase enrollment in child art classes by seven percent by May of 2018. This is easy enough to measure and determine as long as MAE has kept enrollment records. They can total up the number of children who were enrolled in various art classes from May 2016 to May 2017. Then in May 2018 they can total up the number of children who were enrolled in art classes from May 2017 to May 2018. They should take note which classes were offered both years and compare the specific numbers between them. They should also look at the number of children who took more than one art class throughout the year. Being able to see a change in the enrollment patterns will definitely indicate that our strategic communication plan is working.

Our second action objective is to increase donations by five percent by May of 2018. The measurement strategy here is similar to the class enrollment. MAE needs to record how much money they have received through donations from May 2016 to May 2017. In May 2018 they will then record how much they have received from May 2017 to May 2018. If there has been at least a five percent increase, they have reached our target.

Even though we are focusing on three objectives, there are still other ways to evaluate the success of the strategic communication plan. Have they gained more volunteers? Have more people joined their email list? Has there been an increase in foot traffic to their retail space? Is there more revenue coming in from art supply sales? Are there more reviews on Google, Yelp, and/or Facebook? Has there been an increase in the number of artists/art groups who want to participate in their events? If at any point during and after the campaign the answer is yes, that is an indication something is going right for MAE. It is important that MAE be encouraged by any sign of improvement, no matter how small. If our campaign is executed correctly, then they should see the results they need.

## **Appendix: Crisis Communications Plan**

### **Purpose and Implantation of Plan**

Maquoketa Art Experience's Crisis Communications Plan outlines the roles, responsibilities, and protocols that will guide the organization in promptly sharing information with all the non-profit's audiences during an emergency or crisis. For the purposes of this plan, a crisis is defined as a significant event that prompts news coverage and public scrutiny. It has the potential to damage Maquoketa Art Experience's reputation and financial stability. A crisis could be precipitated by an emergency or a controversy. An emergency is a fire, tornado, or other event which presents a threat. A controversy better describes a major case of employee misconduct.

### **Escalation Plan**

The Crisis Communications Team, to be determined by Maquoketa Art Experience, will implement some, or all, of the steps outlined below based on circumstances

- React to outdoor sirens/public address system for immediate threats (tornado, gunman)
- Send email and text message to constituents if organization is closed
- Activate and post notifications on Maquoketa Art Experience’s social media channels
- Send media alert as appropriate
- Send messages and update content through the social media accounts of Maquoketa Art Experience as appropriate

The Crisis Communications Team will convene where the following tasks will be carried out.

- Designate a note taker who can maintain to-do lists, meeting notes, and files
- Make a list of known facts that can and cannot be released to the media if the media is involved.
- Determine whether a response is needed and if it is needed, who will the key audience be in the news release, press release, or social media posts.
- Develop several key messages that will be included in all communications. All the messages should evolve as circumstances change, but should always aim to restore and maintain confidence. Another message may need to be what Maquoketa Art Experience is doing to make sure the crisis, or a problem doesn’t happen again.
- If a situation arises that is on the smaller scale, such as a negative review on Facebook, we advise that the organization reply to the comment. Maquoketa Art Experience should determine one individual to reply to all social media complaints. This individual should do the following:
  - Respond as quickly as possible, for not responding is an inadvertent response. Respond within 12 hours of the crisis.

- Be transparent and consistent, for it will help regain trust with the public.
- If the organization is at fault, respond by apologizing for the situation at hand. Showing empathy can help regain trust and rebuild reputations. State what the organization will do to avoid the situation again.
- Don't speculate on facts, keep all messages consistent

## Spokespeople

In a time of emergency, it is critical for a high-ranking leader of Maquoketa Art Experience to be the public face and take the lead in communicating key messages and answering questions. Such action illustrates that the situation is under control and that efforts are being made to address any questions that have arisen. We believe that Nancy Mayfield would be best for this role. Nancy has the most day to day knowledge of Maquoketa Art Experience, as she is the only paid employee.

## Monitoring and Follow-Up

Maquoketa Art Experience will need to use the crisis situation to reassess the organization. Furthermore, the organization should share the steps they have taken with the public to make sure the crisis doesn't occur again. These steps should be released to the media as well as on social platforms no longer than seven days after the crisis has ended.