



Santa Claus Anonymous Presentation

Antieris Johnson

Andrew Knox

Emily Karsh

Katie Watkins

Table of Contents

Overview	Page 2
Branding ...	Page 5
Fundraising ...	Page 11
Distribution ...	Page 17
Redemption ...	Page 17
Conclusion ...	Page 22
Appendix ...	Page 24
Works Cited ...	Page 29

Overview of Presentation

Thank you so much for the opportunity to discover all the good Santa Claus Anonymous has been doing in the Baltimore region since 1934. We have really enjoyed learning about your wonderful organization and truly feel the commitment you have to helping families in need by empowering parents, grandparents and caregivers to purchase gifts for children so that they may enjoy the thrill of opening a present on Christmas morning.

Yet, while there is so much good happening, we also listened to the concerns expressed by Jim Russell over the course of the semester.

In an effort to solve some of these issues, our team analyzed your organization from top to bottom and hope to provide you both solutions and suggestions to assist Santa Claus Anonymous going forward, so you will be able to stay current and relevant, to help as many of those in need as possible and to be a desirable non-profit to support in the eyes of donors.

Who We Are

Our group consists of four graduate students from the University of Baltimore with experience and knowledge in different areas of business and design.

Antieris Johnson

*M.S., Nonprofit Management
and Social Entrepreneurship*

My background includes four years working in the nonprofit sector. Strong interest in developing philanthropic strategies and managing corporate social responsibility campaigns.

Andrew Knox

MFA, Integrated Design

My background includes four years as a graphic designer and motion designer. I have a strong understanding of what often motivates individuals and it is this understanding that directs my work.

Emily Karsh

MFA, Integrated Design

My background includes six years as a graphic designer all of which for various non-profits. I know work with tight budgets every day, and find the best solutions to push marketing further.

Katie Watkins

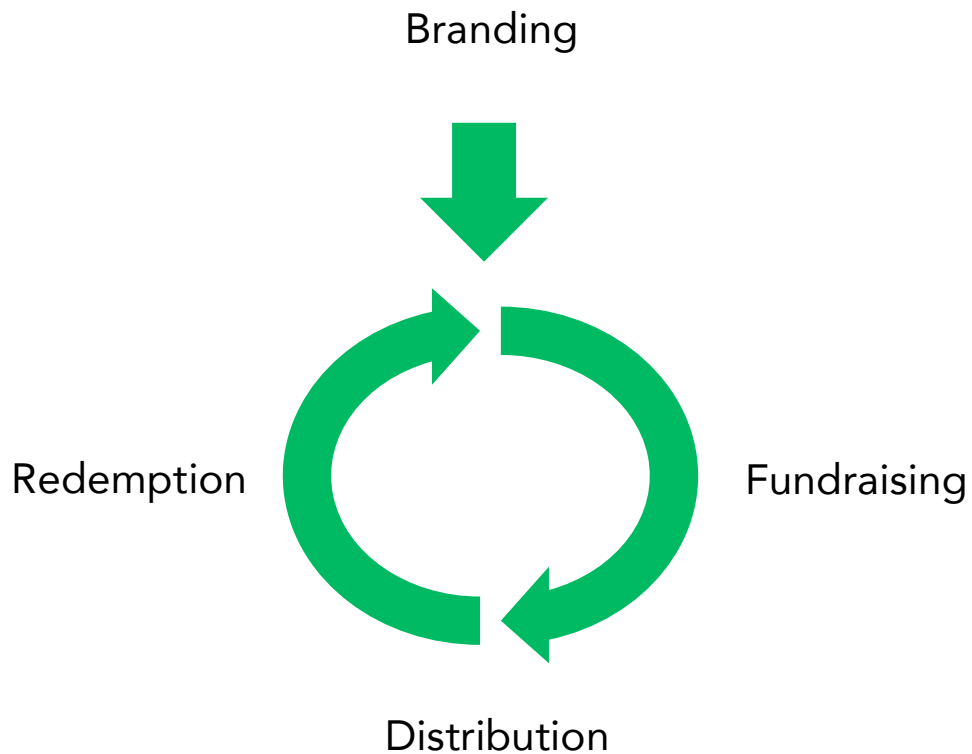
MFA, Integrated Design

My background includes over ten years in finance, project management and sales. I enjoy breaking problems down to their basic level and rebuilding with comprehensive and cost-effective solutions.

Our Approach

In an effort to be streamlined in how we addressed the concerns, we decided to approach the issues step by step, beginning with your logo and collateral (including the website), and tried to understand how issues with your branding may be impacting your business model down the line, from raising donors and contributions, to the distribution of your gift certificates, to the redemption of your gift certificates, and back again.

Model of our Approach



Major Questions

We listened to Jim explain the many facets of your organization and processes. Here are the questions we asked ourselves after the discovery phase that impacted our analysis and research phases:

- How can we improve the perception of the organization in the eyes of both donors and users of the program through the branding?
- How can we provide SCA better tracking abilities so that data can be harnessed, allowing donors to be more strategically targeted, and users of the program more effectively helped?
- How can broader fundraising initiatives improve the visibility of the brand in the Baltimore region?
- How do we reach new board members and bring new energy into the charity?

Desired Outcomes

After asking these questions, we identified the four accomplishments we wanted to achieve through our work:

- Larger Awareness of the program
- Higher gift certificate redemption
- Raising donors and contributions
- Add engaged and energized board members

Branding

“Your brand is the single most important investment you can make in your business.”

-Steve Jobs

Why?

It isn't just about *looking pretty* - a comprehensive and deliberate brand sets the tone of your business and communicates a message to an audience when you don't have the opportunity to explain it directly. This can be through a website, an event ticket, or a handout at a fundraiser.

Cohesive design has impact on a company's first impressions to new audiences, supports market differentiation and memorability, and effects donor loyalty. Per designer and entrepreneur, Lauren Hooker of Elle & Co. “When people see that your logo, social media accounts, website, business cards, and packaging are cohesive and consistent, they assume that your offerings and services will be, too. And that builds trust” (Hooker). In the modern nonprofit environment, donor trust and recipient trust are essential elements for Santa Claus Anonymous to flourish.

It may not seem immediately obvious why a piece of marketing material, such as a letter, should have the exact same look and feel as the company's website or an event ticket. Building a cohesive brand can sometimes mean paying attention to the smallest of details, so that your audience has the same experience with your company each time there is an interaction. Former Disney CEO, Michael Eisner, once said: “A brand is a living entity—and it is enriched or undermined cumulatively over time, the product of a thousand small gestures”. Individually these *small gestures* may seem trivial, but collectively, they have a huge influence on the relationship you build with your audience.

Included within these small gestures are visual elements, such as fonts, logos, colors, and patterns, as well as non-visual ones, such as tone and terminology. In the next section we'll dissect these visual and non-visual options to offer a more cohesive brand for Santa Claus Anonymous.

Research & Results

The first part of our research was to review the logo, website, and collateral provided to the class by Jim Russell, and to perform testing to determine quality of message.

Visual Elements

We showed a few designers and friends to see what kind of initial reaction SCA's branding would receive. Here are the results, quoted:

"It just doesn't seem *fun*. It lacks the pizzazz of Christmas."

"I don't understand the striped bar underneath; it almost looks like its still loading."

"They clearly have no specified color palette they are using. There are reds, greens, yellows ... and then here... here is a different red."

"The Santa is a little dark and scary to me. It isn't warm and cheery like I'd expect."

Non-Visual Elements

It isn't just about your logo, or 'mark,' on a simple level. Building a brand means starting from the bottom up, so a letter or webpage doesn't just *read* well, it looks like it belongs with the rest of the collateral family.

Readability

We have covered branding in an effort to streamline SCA's message. Readability is another component of messaging that we feel plays a large role in how effective a message is in reaching its intended audience.

Readability is the ease in which a piece of written content can be comprehended. When we write, we are trying to communicate. Whether it's a letter or a solicitation for donations, the readability of the message determines whether the reader can act. Readability can apply to print, web, and any other collateral where type is used to communicate.

Let's start by disproving that the higher the reading level the better writing. Ernest Hemingway wrote at a 4th grade reading level if this tells you anything. Like design, readability is concerned with one thing: effective communication.

Not to be confused with legibility, which consists on the ease in which one can visually decipher the content, readability is concerned only with the ease in which content is understood.

As writers, we are attempting to communicate and when the readability of content extends past the ability of the reader there is a communication breakdown. This is where knowing your audience becomes integral, but even if you don't know your audience, there are some general guidelines for readability that have been established. A 6th to 7th grade level is recommended for Public Health Communications. There are some states that mandate that all material concerning car insurance and banks fall under a 9th grade reading level. These are some indicators of where the writing should fall on all your correspondence and collateral.

The majority of people are not reading past an eighth grade level, whether that is by choice, education or limitations, so keeping writing at this level is necessary for effective messaging.

What is Flesch Kincaid? (More in Appendix I)

World Heritage Encyclopedia explains the Flesch-Kincaid assessment as: "readability tests designed to indicate comprehension difficulty when reading a passage of contemporary academic English."

This test is the standard in assessing readability. It is so ingrained in our infrastructure that it comes as a feature on most word processing programs including Microsoft Word. It was originally developed by the military to assess the difficulty in technical manuals and it didn't take long to spread over to other public and private sector agencies. There are actually two tests, and they are used in correlation to determine an accurate depiction of how easily comprehended content is. The Flesch Reading Ease assessment is correlated on a scale being 1-100 and the higher the number the more readable the content is. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Assessment uses the same "core measures" (word length, sentence length and number of syllables) to assess the readability. The Flesch kincaid, however utilizes a scale of K-12, which correlates to the grades in American school. The level can extend beyond 12 in the FKGL assessment and dip below 0 in the FRE assessment.

How does Readability Apply to SCA?

In reviewing SCA's collateral, we found that much of it is written at a very high level. Some content reached as high as a twelfth grade level. This might not sound concerning, but take into consideration that much of the Harvard Law

Review is written at an 11th grade level, you get the picture. Using the Flesch Reading Ease Assessment we can see the same pattern of writing that may prove less than ideal when readability is concerned. The following data shows both the Flesch Reading Ease and the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level assessment for much of SCA's collateral. There is also some data indicating what we were able to refine the collateral down to in terms of Readability.

Readability Revisions

Parent Letter

Before:

Flesch Reading Ease	58.8
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8

After:

Flesch Reading Ease	67.9
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	6.3

Print Explanation

Before:

Flesch Reading Ease	35
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	12

After:

Flesch Reading Ease	58
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	7.7

Donor Solicitation Letter

Before:

Flesch Reading Ease	58.1
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	10

After:

Flesch Reading Ease	62.9
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.1

President's Letter

Before:

Flesch Reading Ease	52.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	10.5

After:

Flesch Reading Ease	56.7
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.7

How it Works(web)

Before:

Flesch Reading Ease	49.1
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	10.2

After:

Flesch Reading Ease	63.2
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	6.9

Contact(web)

Before:

Flesch Reading Ease	57.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	10

After:

Flesch Reading Ease	67
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	7.2

Findings

The results indicate that the overall ease of reading needs to be higher and the grade level needs to be reduced, so that the material is approachable to more reading levels.

In addition to the readability question, there is the question of consistency of the material. If one piece is reading at an 11th grade level and another at an 8th grade level, the consistency of the content is also an issue. In this area, Santa Claus Anonymous may be unintentionally alienating potential donors and recipients.

Going further...

An interesting discovery was also made when assessing the readability of the SCA's content: The name *Santa Claus Anonymous* raised any single piece of collateral one full grade level. Given that the number of syllables is one of the criteria that is weighed for both FRE assessment and the FKGL assessment, the 8 syllables in Santa Claus Anonymous drastically affected the readability of the document. This could indicate a problem with the name itself. Is this a recognizable term or is it failing to reach the intended audience.

Here is our zag: What about the name **Santa's Cause**. We felt the name was fun, playing off the slight pun created between Santa Claus and Santa's Cause. It also was shorter and maintained lower reading levels when added to the readability testing.

Plan of Action

We have developed a basic style guide for you should you want to better define your marketing materials and give your logo a fresh look.

Color Palette



CMYK:	7 / 85 / 76 / 1	72 / 17 / 76 / 3
RGB:	222 / 77 / 69	77 / 157 / 103
HEX:	#DE4D45	#4D9D67

Revised Logo

Santa Claus
ANONYMOUS

Typefaces

Balladeer Medium
Nimbus Sans Extended

In Summary

As far as readability is concerned, it doesn't matter how readable your content is, if you don't have anything to say that people want or need to hear. This is where SCA is ahead of the game and with some moderate revisions; they can absolutely get this message to the people that will benefit most from it.

There are greater opportunities for SCA to strengthen, communicate, and expand Santa Claus Anonymous' brand throughout Baltimore and beyond that will attract more supporters, donors, volunteers, and partners to the organization. To satisfy these needs, we developed a solicitation strategy and designed collateral material that will raise SCA's profile, so ultimately, SCA can create greater social impact and develop tighter organizational cohesion. The solicitation strategy outlines the strategic steps required to leverage SCA's friend-raising and fundraising goals, as well as board, staff, and volunteer responsibilities in accomplishing the plan. The solicitation strategy will also provide a shared understanding of organizational fundraising priorities for the SCA Board, staff, and volunteers.

Fundraising

“Strong brands in all sectors help organizations acquire financial, human, and social resources, and build key partnerships” (Kylander and Stone 38).

Strong brands also build trust between its donors, partners, volunteers, and beneficiaries.

As a result, nonprofits can make greater strides to achieving its mission. A brand is more than a visual identity, such as the name, logo, and colors used by an organization. A brand is a feeling that a customer gets when experiencing the nonprofit, including both the staff and the services. “Externally, the brand reflects the image held in the minds of the organization's multiple stakeholders, not just its donors and supporters but also those it seeks to influence, assist, or reach” (Kylander and Stone 39).

After reviewing SCA's current fundraising plan, we noticed that the public primarily experiences and interacts with SCA, and thereby its brand, in September, November, and December.

Our initial thoughts were:

- There were missed opportunities for SCA to make a greater social impact. If SCA would friend-raise and fundraise throughout the entire year they can help give more children in Maryland a Christmas. Perhaps the website would be a valuable asset for this.
- SCA's current fundraising events give few opportunities for families to experience the brand. "Customers experience your brand at specific touch points, so choosing what those touch points are, and influencing what happens there, is important work" (Zag, 2007, Location No. 1036). We needed to develop stronger touchpoints so donors had a stronger emotional connection to SCA's mission, above and beyond what the logo and branding could offer.

Our thoughts and questions led us to research new strategies to help SCA expand its messaging and donor base, raise revenue, attract passionate supporters, and create a greater social impact.

Research & Results

"We need more exposure. Bottom line."

–Jim Russell

We wanted to test our initial thoughts and developed multiple surveys to research if our suspicions were accurate.

Website

According to National Philanthropy Trust, online giving grew by 13.5% in 2013. Small nonprofits grew their online giving the most. We tested the efficiency and effectiveness of SCA's donation page by conducting a usability test. Five users were asked to visit SCA's website and answer the following questions:

- 1. How quickly can you discover the organization's mission?**
- 2. How quickly can you understand where donations go?**
- 3. Does the organization have content on their donor page that is irrelevant or distracting?**
- 4. Do you feel safe providing credit card or other private information?**

After answering the questions, the same users were also asked to perform the following tasks, beginning with the following explanation:

You are considering whether you want to donate to Santa Claus Anonymous, but first you want to do some basic research about the organization before making a donation.

Task #1: First, you want to find out the purpose of the organization. Take as much time as you need researching the site and tell me what this organization does.

Task #2: Now, you are considering making a donation. You want to use the website to find out specifically how your donation will be used by this organization.

Task #3: You want to support this organization because you believe in their mission. You want to make a gift of \$50.00 every month for the next year for a total of \$600.

Results

While the users could easily locate the donation page within SCA's website, the following experiences were deemed negative results:

- Users were unsure if "Give a Child a Christmas" is SCA's tag line or mission statement. **Mission is not clearly defined.**
- 3 out of 5 users experienced seeing a page that said "this connection is untrusted" when they clicked on the donation link. **Security needs to be addressed so users build trust.**
- 5 out of 5 users would like to know how donation is being used. e.g. Your donation of \$100 will help buy toys for 3 kids. **Program might be unclear to donors. 'Unclear' might be creating distrust.**
- 5 out of 5 users would like the donation page to have a monthly gift option. One user wanted to see drop down menu of set amounts when clicking in the amount box to make the process more convenient. **Missed opportunity to take advantage of reliable donation schedules.**

The results of the website study indicated there may be missed opportunity to raise donations, either through monthly contributions or through distrust with online security messages and possibly an unclear program.

Plan of Action

We developed a three tiered plan of action based on the research and results of our user testing of the website and full review of current SCA fundraisers.

Tier One

We propose SCA address trust issues and possible confusion with the website. One way is to clearly identify the mission statement on the homepage of the website: *The mission of Santa Claus Anonymous is to give a child a Christmas.* Recent research by *Network for Good* indicates that 30-40% of the donation volume for a nonprofit website is monthly giving (Stein). Currently SCA is not taking advantage of this feature. Thus, we also recommend adding a "monthly gift" option to the donation form and fixing any security alerts that arise when donors click. Additionally, we propose that the "ways to help page" include examples of how donors' money will be utilized.

Tier Two

We propose SCA focus on simplifying its fundraising strategies and use money more effectively in other ways. "When focus is paired with differentiation, supported by a trend, and surrounded by compelling communications, you have the basic ingredients of a zag" (Zag, 2007, Location No. 335). We recommend SCA participate in events that have higher, broader audiences and would minimize the workload of getting the public to attend your event. SCA can focus more on creating memorable experiences that will attract and retain passionate supporters. Additionally, purchasing email lists doesn't allow donors to experience your brand before asking them for money. Instead of purchasing email lists, SCA can save money by collecting information from the public at well-attended events.

One of the new strategies we are proposing is to participate in Artscape.

Artscape is America's largest free arts festival that attracts over 400,000 attendees over three days. In comparison, the Parkville Fair is a one day event that attracts only 35,000+ attendees. Additionally, it has the added benefits of:

Expanding messaging and donor base:

In 2012, 47% percent of attendees (an estimated 164,500 people) visited from outside of the Baltimore Metropolitan Area. Twelve percent, or 42,000 attendees, traveled from outside of the State of Maryland to experience the festivities.

Raise revenue:

According to survey data, 2012 Artscape attendees spent \$3.4 million in art from exhibitors. Other retailers gained nearly \$1.3 million in revenue.

Attract new volunteers and future board members:

59% of attendees are under the age of 35. The 50+ crowd enjoys Artscape as well and represents 20.7% of attendees, which will allow SCA to strengthen the relationship with its current donor base.

We contacted Susan Fortkiewicz, Festival Manager of Artscape to inquire about this opportunity. We pitched to Susan the idea of SCA partnering with an arts organization to host a Santa's art workshop in the Kidscape area of Artscape. Kidscape is an area at Artscape for kids that allows them to participate in hands-on arts and craft activities. Ms. Fortkiewicz stated that "it would be a nice opportunity."

Participating in Artscape will allow SCA staff, volunteers, and families to experience SCA's brand in a new, exciting, and fun way! Picture this: Arts and crafts, face painting, a "Christmas in July" photo booth with Santa, and well-designed collateral to complete the experience. As a result, SCA will expand its messaging, raise revenue, attract new friends, and collect data to expand donor base.

The full solicitation strategy can be found in the Appendix section.

Tier Three

We propose building strategic partnerships to assist SCA in meeting larger goals. "By leveraging the trust of partners...an organization can make greater strides toward achieving its mission" (Kylander and Stone 38). There are opportunities to create collaborative (time-limited, multi-year, ongoing) and transformative partnerships that will allow SCA to acquire more resources and revenue to support its mission and expand its messaging.

Artscape

About: Artscape is America's largest free arts festival that attracts over 400,000 attendees over three days.

Event Date: July 15-17, 2016

Location: Mount Royal Avenue & Cathedral Street, Charles Street, Bolton Hill, and Station North Arts & Entertainment District neighborhoods.

Artscape guidelines require vendors to be an arts organization or partner with an arts organizations. The benefits of partnering will also cut vendor fees in half. The application fee for Artscape is \$60 and the tent fee is \$700 (additional Artscape vendor

guideline can be found in the Appendix section). We propose partnering with one of the following organizations.

Art with a Heart - The mission of Art with a Heart is to enhance the lives of people in need through visual art. Art with a Heart is a nonprofit that brings its interactive visual arts classes to schools, community centers, group homes, shelters, hospitals, permanent housing facilities and senior housing facilities. HeARTwares is the organization's social enterprise, retail store where artwork created by students and volunteers is showcased and available for purchase.

University of Baltimore College of Arts and Sciences - University of Baltimore is currently a sponsor of Artscape. Partnering with University of Baltimore College of Arts and Sciences will engage a younger audience that will inspire them to intern and/or volunteer at SCA.

Mayor's Annual Back-to-School Pep Rally

About: The Mayor's Annual Back to School Rally is a community-wide event for Baltimore City Public School System students and their families. The event offers an exciting day of entertainment, fun, community resources, and more to get students and their families ready for a successful school year.

Date: Beginning of August

Location: War Memorial Plaza (At City Hall)

There's an opportunity for SCA to partner with its current merchant Super Kids Uniform to provide uniforms or gift certificates to purchase uniforms to the first 50 people who complete a SCA contact form. Again, this allows SCA to collect information about new "friends" that can be added to the current donor list. SCA board, staff, and other volunteers can share information about SCA's mission, vision, and events. The SCA team can also provide hands-on arts & crafts activities for kids, face painting, and Santa's photo booth to engage the public and allow them to experience SCA's brand.

Kidspace Annual Trik-or-Trok 5K Run

About: Kidspace, in partnership with the Baltimore Orioles and Angela and Buck Showalter, invite the public to run or walk for kids in foster care. Participants can dress up in their favorite Halloween costume and raise money for a good cause. Gift certificates are presented to top runners, age group winners, and best costumes.

Date: End of October

Location: Oriole Park at Camden Yards

The mission of Kidspeace is to give hope, help and healing to children, families and communities. SCA can partner with Kidspeace to select a certain number of qualified families to receive gift certificates. Partnership will allow SCA to participate in a 5K race without having to find a major sponsor.

Information found in Appendix

How to Register Your Organization on AmazonSmile, Appendix II

How to Register Your Organization on Goodshop, Appendix III

How to Become a Maryland Charity Campaign Charity, Appendix IV

Artscape Vendor Guidelines, Appendix V

Full Solicitation Strategy, Appendix VI

In Summary

We know we've given SCA a lot to think about, but here are a few action steps that you can take to implement some of our proposed strategies.

- Create a constant contact or mailchimp account
- Add a "monthly gift" option to the website
- Contact potential partners to build relationship
- Review guidelines to become a Maryland Charity Campaign Charity and other suggested events

Distribution

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

-Helen Keller

Throughout the semester, Jim Russell shared the changes in SCA's distribution model – from working solely with Department of Social Services to now working with Housing. He expressed concern over the switch but was optimistic that with the new blood, there would be more people invested in supporting the mission of Santa Claus Anonymous.

Since this was an area that seemed very much in transition, our group chose to limit the research and action plan for this area, and to suggest seeing how this new avenue helped.

We would encourage SCA to also consider, after building strategic partnerships for fundraising efforts as described in the Fundraising section, utilizing these avenues to discover additional families in need. We believe working more closely with local

communities would build trust with families using the program and further spread the name of SCA. In the event, down the line, DSS and Housing are no longer supportive and beneficial, these partnerships may prove to be effective in reaching families truly in need.

Redemption

“Design drives innovation; innovation powers brand; brand builds loyalty; and loyalty sustains profits”.

-Marty Neumeier, author of *The Brand Gap*

And yes, innovation is scary.

Almost as essential to the future success as raising contributions, Santa Claus Anonymous must raise the redemption rate of those receiving the gift certificate. Long term, one must consider the benefits of raising dollar after dollar if only the same number of users redeemed. This got us thinking... and researching.

Ultimately, we felt the redemption aspect of Santa Claus Anonymous was what set it apart from other Christmas assistance programs in the region and beyond, in essence, what **differentiated** it from other non-profits such as *Toys for Tots* or the *Empty Stocking Fund*. Superficially, this program is for the children, as emphasized in your tagline: “Give a child a Christmas.” However, on a deeper, more profound level, what sets SCA apart is what it does for the adults: It provides these parents, grandparents and caregivers the dignity to purchase their own gifts for their own family members. No other Christmas non-profit we could find provided families in need such a memorable, personalized experience. Katrina C.’s story, from your website, spoke to this: “... It was a very difficult time and getting those certificates made it possible for me to give my children a bit of Christmas and a sense of normalcy to make a new start”.

Clearly, empowering parents was what differentiated Santa Claus Anonymous from the market, but was that enough? With lower than desired redemption rates, we felt something was not working with the model. Marty Neumeier writes in “Zag”:
“Differentiation, the art of standing out from the competition, is not front-page news. What IS front-page news, in a world of extreme clutter, is that you need more than differentiation. You need RADICAL differentiation. The new rule: When everybody zigs, zag.”

Our zag: Take the redemption aspect *online*. American e-commerce sales have risen from \$176 billion in 2010 to \$279 billion in 2015 (Zorzini). The trend towards shopping online is only increasing - what will we see in the next five years and how can SCA capitalize on this trend?

Research & Results

We knew we wanted to think outside the box for this aspect of Santa Claus Anonymous' offering but we knew there would be hurdles recommending an entirely different process for redeeming the gift certificates.

First we wanted to define the biggest problems with the current model.

- No trackable data.
 - This meant that SCA could not track users of the program for future abilities to adapt to the changing needs and interests of those using the program as well as to provide more compelling statistics of the program to donors.
- Merchant contracts.
 - Jim Russell stated that Nicole spent a majority of her time working through the merchant contracts each year, and said that these were often complex due to the fact merchants had to adapt their systems to recognize the SCA gift certificate.
- Limited selection.
 - We felt one of the big reasons redemption was reaching less than desirable rates was due to the fact that many participating merchants were not local or convenient, and the selection of gifts, especially toys, were limited.

Findings

We suspected that an online offering would be just as desirable, if not more so, than a local, very limited, merchant shopping experience. We created a survey, asking a few pointed questions to see if our suspicions were accurate. Of 22 responders, 9 responded that they would prefer to shop online versus 10 responders desiring the freedom to shop at merchants. Not only was this avenue just desirable as the current program, when you also factor in the ability to track users and their purchasing habits, raise the selection of toys and other gift options and reduce Nicole's hours, it seemed like figuring out a solution in the online environment was the answer. Additionally, SCA could use the data to

provide better services to families in need year after year, as well as have remarkable information to share with donors who want to know how their dollars are truly helping families.

Plan of Action

Once the decision had been made to take it online, we spent some time identifying the obvious (and not so obvious) hurdles to this approach. Since this is a “zag,” we couldn’t look to other nonprofits already using this model for inspiration - we’d need to outline the process from scratch.

Major Hurdles:

- Since gift certificates would now be redeemed online, would families in need have access to the internet?
- How would SCA maintain an inventory and ship purchased product?

Hurdle #1:

A recent study by Pew Research indicated that many lower-income Americans have access to the internet through a smartphone. As recent as April of this year, CNBC reported that the new Pew research “illustrates what many low-income households are experiencing—that smartphones are playing an increasingly outsized role in their lives. Cellphones serve as digital lifelines for everything from health-care information to job hunts (Ungarino)”.

The study proved that lower income families have experienced greater and greater access to the internet via smartphones, and this provided further evidence to support a move toward gift certificate redemption in the online environment.

Hurdle #2:

This was the largest barrier to moving redemption online. Would SCA’s website open an e-commerce page on their site? Inventory? These were not processes SCA had expressed wanting to own. We’d need to think outside the box to provide a solution.

Becoming an AmazonSmile partner seemed to answer most of the barriers under this hurdle and provided a great number of benefits, such as storing and monitoring inventory and handling all fulfillment services, shipping orders, as well as managing customer service and returns. Additionally, in 2014, CNET reported that “Amazon third-party vendors sold more than 2 billion items in 2014” (Whitney). Amazon has built itself to be a trusting resource for online shopping, and SCA could find ways to take advantage of the model to vastly improve redemption options for the gift certificate users.

We understand this would be a big “zag” for SCA but ultimately a relationship with Amazon would allow SCA to take advantage of the online shopping trend and offer a way better selection of toys, clothes and shoes for children of families in need.

In Summary

Redemption levels are too low for SCA to continue raising funds without addressing the problem. We believe that limited merchants and little product selections have an impact on this lower than desired redemption rate. Additionally, the current model does not allow SCA to track users of the program, learn about the most desirable purchases for that season, and requires complex and timely merchant contracts for Nicole.

By taking advantage of the online shopping trend, and partnering with AmazonSmile to take advantage of their fulfillment services, we believe SCA could take achieve much higher redemption rates, reduce the time spent managing contracts, track users to improve the services and offerings for families and need and provide compelling statistics to new donors, especially corporations, who want to fully know how their monies are spent, how many families have been helped and in what ways.

There would be time and frustration changing the current model to this concept, but ultimately, we believe there is a great potential to think outside the box with Amazon to create a new program that would greatly benefit SCA.

Full list of benefits:

- Increased redemption rates
- Anonymity maintained for program users
- Trackable data for service improvements, statistics used for donor solicitation and grant opportunities
- No timely merchant contracts
- Broad selection of toys, clothes and shoes
- Fulfillment services provided
- Trusted shopping experience

Conclusion

Thank you again for allowing us to learn about Santa Claus Anonymous and all the wonderful work it is doing in the Baltimore region by giving families in need a joyous Christmas morning. We have been inspired by your commitment to the program and we sincerely hope the research and work we have done will be an asset to your nonprofit as you look for ways to grow and help more families over the years to come.

We tried to take an approach by reviewing each of the integral steps of your program, beginning with your branding, and then understanding how it relates down the line - through fundraising, distribution of your gift certificates, to the redemption of your gift certificates and back again.

Branding

We found inconsistencies in your message, from both a visual and non visual standpoint. We recommended maintaining more consistency in your logo and marketing materials by sticking to a new, official color palette, and hiring a designer (or design firm) to create your marketing materials so they are more professional, cohesive and fun. We also suggest you look for alternative sources to write your correspondence and any copy on collateral, as high reading levels may be causing lower than desired understanding of your program and unintentionally alienating donors.

Fundraising

We encourage you to build stronger partnerships with other local charities and attend events with more visibility and broader reach in the Baltimore area. As Artscape takes place in July, we felt there were many opportunities to spread your message under a "Christmas in July" theme with arts and crafts, face painting, a "Christmas in July" photo booth with Santa. Combined with a more effective collateral campaign, this could really bring broader awareness of your program as well as continue to bring fun into your brand. Additionally, we also recommend you add monthly donation features to your website to take advantage of ongoing contribution funds. These strategic partnerships could also be taken advantage of should a new method of distributing of gift certificates be needed.

Redemption

Time for a zag! We recommended a curve ball here - we know moving on the online environment has some significant hurdles to set up, but long term we felt this would provide so many benefits, while still continuing to maintain that *anonymous* feel that SCA is so proud of. Becoming an AmazonSmile partner would solve many of the issues and we feel there is the potential, once the relationship has been established, to build

an “outside of the box” partnership that requires less risk for SCA. Additionally, Nicole’s time spent managing merchant contracts would be reduced, and user data could be collected - services could be adapted to better serve those in need as well as used for donor solicitation.

APPENDIX

Appendix I

Flesch-Kincaid Readability Testing

Flesch–Kincaid readability tests are readability tests designed to indicate how difficult a reading passage in English is to understand.

There are two tests; the Flesch reading ease, and the Flesch–Kincaid grade level.

Although they use the same core measures (word length and sentence length), they have different weighting factors. The results of the two tests correlate approximately inversely: a text with a comparatively high score on the Reading Ease test should have a lower score on the grade-level test.

For more information and to learn about the formula behind the test, visit:

http://www.mang.canterbury.ac.nz/writing_guide/writing/flesch.shtml

Appendix II

How to Register Your Organization on AmazonSmile

Get Started

How do I register and receive donations for my charitable organization?

Registering your organization is easy. In order to register and receive donations, you must be an official representative of an eligible organization, and then follow these easy steps:

1. Search for your charitable organization by name or EIN number and then select the organization you represent. Be sure to confirm you are selecting the correct organization, as many charitable organizations have similar names.
2. Create an organization administrator account and accept the AmazonSmile Participation Agreement on behalf of your organization.
3. Verify your email address (we recommend that you use an email address that is associated with your charitable organization).
4. Submit your organization's bank account information.
5. Upload a copy of a voided check or bank statement to verify your organization's bank account information.

What is an organization administrator?

An organization administrator is an official representative of an organization that has authority to access and manage AmazonSmile program information on behalf of their charitable organization.

Why do you need an email address for my charitable organization?

We require a valid email address so that we can communicate important program information to each registered organization. From time to time we will send emails with information about your organization's donation amounts and information about AmazonSmile program promotions.

Can you mail our organization a donation check instead of sending an electronic funds transfer?

We do not mail donation checks due to the expense of check processing and fulfillment. We distribute donations using electronic transfer to reduce operational expenses so we can donate 100% of the funds to eligible charitable organizations.

Will customers still be able to select my charitable organization if I don't register?

Yes. As long as your organization is listed by [GuideStar](#) and meets our eligibility criteria, customers will be able to select your organization. However, no donations will be made to your organization until you complete your free registration. See "What happens if we do not register ..." under Receive Donations for more information on how donations are processed for organizations that do not register and provide bank account information.

What happens if another person has already registered my charitable organization and they were not authorized to do so?

If your organization has been registered by an unauthorized person please [contact us](#).

Appendix III

How to Register Your Organization on Goodshop

Visit [Goodshop](#) to add Santa Claus Anonymous as a new charity.

[Add a New Charity](#)

Thanks for your interest in getting your favorite cause listed on Goodshop!

Before you fill out an application, have you looked to see if your cause is already listed? You can search for your cause [here](#).

To participate in our program, your organization must be a registered non-profit or school. This can include charities, hospitals and clinics, volunteer services, political organizations, fraternal organizations, professional associations, religious organizations, governmental agencies, etc.

We currently only work with U.S. charities and schools but plan to expand internationally in the future.

Appendix IV

How to Become a Maryland Charity Campaign Charity

The [Charitable Organizations Division](#) of the Secretary of State's Office administers and reviews all the Maryland Charity Campaign applications. All applications must meet the requirements of the Executive Order to be approved for participation in the Maryland Charity Campaign.

In order to be eligible for designation as a "participating agency" in the 2015 campaign, a charitable organization must have:

- Certified full compliance with federal, state, and local laws.
- Been operating under valid articles of incorporation (or other organizing instruments), and by-laws (or other governing instruments).
- Had a current, valid 501(c)3 designation from the Internal Revenue Service, and be eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions under section 170 of the IRS code.
- Submitted a copy of IRS Form 990 for the most recently completed fiscal year; or if not required to file an IRS Form 990, a financial report form COF-85, provided by the Secretary of State, and signed and certified by its Chief Executive Officer.
- Stated and certified the percentage of total revenue from the preceding fiscal year that was spent on management and fundraising activities.
- Submitted a statement demonstrating that its expenses for these purposes were reasonable under all the circumstances in its case, if the percentage of revenue spent by a charitable organization on management and fundraising under item 5 exceeded 25%.
- Submitted a copy of the current operating budget signed and certified by the Chief Executive Officer.

- Demonstrated that it has provided significant services to Maryland residents or those in need of such services in other countries for two years prior to January 1, 2015.
- Provided evidence of financial support from Maryland residents within the past five years if the organization is providing services in other countries.
- Certified that all funds from the campaign will be used solely for the provision of services to residents of Maryland, or people in other countries, including reasonable administrative costs of those programs.
- Had a majority of its governing body serve without compensation.
- Provided its annual financial report to the public upon request.
- Submitted an application and proper attachments to the Secretary of State's Office by February 20, 2015.

MCC applications for the 2015 campaign will be available online in January 2015 and may be downloaded from this website. The deadline to receive applications for the 2015 MCC is February 20, 2015. Exact deadline will be posted on the application. Failure to comply with the filing deadline results in denial to participate in MCC.

Charitable organizations that submit an incomplete application are sent an initial denial letter and given ten days from the date of the letter to submit the required materials. Failure to do so results in a final denial from participation in the campaign.

Applicants approved for participation will receive a letter certifying their eligibility in July 2015. The payroll department begins deducting funds for the 2014 MCC in January 2015. Checks for the 2014 campaign will be sent to the participating charities during the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2015, and the first quarter of 2016.

Appendix V

Artscape Vendor Guidelines

Artscape, the largest FREE, arts festival in America, is produced by the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts, Inc. (BOPA) on behalf of the Baltimore Festival of the Arts, Inc. (BFAI).

The 34th annual Artscape: July 17-19, 2015
(Friday & Saturday: 11am-9pm and Sunday: 11am-8pm)

Artscape is now accepting submissions from non-profit arts organizations for the 2015 festival.

Exhibitor Packages are \$700 (for a 10'x10'x7' space) and include:

- Festival provided tent with sidewall - there are no "stand alone" spaces
- Free access to an electrical outlet and basic overhead lighting
- Overnight roaming security
- On-site Artscape help-line
- Exhibitor Hospitality Welcome at check-in (snacks and bottled water)
- Listing on Artscape website
- A comprehensive exhibitor guide (emailed pre festival) with helpful tips
- Access to over 350,000 potential members for three days

Exhibition spaces reserved for Arts Organizations at the festival are intended to highlight non-profit organizations that support the visual or performing arts in Baltimore and the surrounding region. Arts Organizations are encouraged to use Artscape as a marketing and promotional tool. While Festival staff recognizes that Artscape is an excellent opportunity to generate revenue, we require that Arts Organizations featured at Artscape limit the amount of merchandise available for sale in their booth, to 40% of all materials exhibited. BOPA reserves the right to refuse participation by any organization at its sole discretion.

In order to be considered for an Arts Organization space at Artscape, you must be a non-profit and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Arts related regionally-based cultural institution
- Arts related cultural resource
- Arts related educational institution

Deadline to Apply: March 31, 2015

Notification of Application Status: Week of May 11, 2015

If you have any questions about our Arts Organization program or application, please contact Krista Green, at kgreen@promotionandarts.com.

Additional Contacts:

Artscape Festival Manager: Susan Fortkiewicz, sfortkiewicz@promotionandarts.org

Kidscape Festival Manger: Pooja Sampathi, psampathi@promotionandarts.org

Appendix VI

Full Solicitation Strategy

STRATEGY	GOALS (dollar amount and response)	TARGET AUDIENCE	DESCRIPTION	WHE N	WHO
AmazonSmile	\$1,000	Previous Donors, Friends and family of staff and board members	AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organizations selected by customers.	January – December 2016	Staff: Register SCA. Submit a spotlight charity application
Goodsearch.com	100 supporters, average of 2 searches per day = \$730 estimated donations/year	Previous Donors, Friends and family of staff and board members	Goodsearch will donate a penny when someone uses the search engine	January – December 2016	Staff: Register SCA
Maryland Charity Campaign	\$10,000	Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	State level workplace giving campaign.	January 2016	Staff: Submit application & proper attachments - Deadline to submit: Feb. 19, 2016; Approvals mailed to organizations early July 2015
Dinner Party	\$1,000 and 5 new donors	Friends and family of board members	Small event in homes of board members (or other supporters)	February 2016	Staff and volunteers: Help recruit hosts, help create invitations/evites, thank yous, logistical support Board: Host party, invite own contacts, provide refreshments
Wine and Canvas Night	\$2,000 and 50 new donors	Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	Known as the “painting class with cocktails,” Wine & Canvas was voted #1 in Art Entertainment. No talent or experience is necessary.	April 2016	Staff and Board: Select venue, Staff, Board, & other volunteers: Help create invitations/evites, thank yous, logistical support

STRATEGY	GOALS (dollar amount and response)	TARGET AUDIENCE	DESCRIPTION	WHEN	WHO
Artscape (Kidscape Area) Location: Corpus Christi Church Lot, Lafayette Street & Mount Royal Avenue	\$5,000 and 100 new donors	Corporate Donors/Sponsors, Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	America's largest free arts festival, attracting 400,000+ attendees over three days. "Christmas in July"	July 2016	Staff, Board, & other volunteers: Greet individuals and tell them about SCA. Provide hands-on arts & crafts activities for kids; face painting, Santa's photo booth
Individual Solicitation – Prospect Email List	\$10,000 and 100 new donors	Corporate Donors/Sponsors, Friends and family of board members, New Donors	"Christmas in July" publicity through email (mail chimp or constant contact). Include MCC info/code on postcard	July 2016	Staff, Board & other volunteers: Prepare materials, identify prospects, draft email, conduct solicitations
Mayor's Annual Back-to-School Pep Rally	\$1,000 and 100 new donors	Corporate Donors/Sponsors, Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	Pep rally filled with entertainment, giveaways, and resources for families	August 2016	Staff, Board, & other volunteers: Greet individuals and tell them about SCA. Provide hands-on arts & crafts activities for kids; face painting, Santa's photo booth. Opportunity to partner w/ current merchant Super Kids Uniform to provide uniforms for first 50 people who complete a SCA contact form.
Maryland Charity Campaign Kick Off Event(s)	100 new donors	Previous Donors, New Donors	State and Government employers invite nonprofits to event	September 2016	Staff or other volunteers: Greet individuals and tell them about SCA. Provide promotional materials.
Kidspace Annual Trik-or-Trot 5K Run	\$1000 and 100 new donors	Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	KidsPeace, in partnership with the Baltimore Orioles and Angela and Buck Showalter, invite individuals to run or walk for kids in foster care.	October 2016	Staff, Board, & other volunteers: Greet individuals and tell them about SCA. Provide hands-on arts & crafts activities for kids; face painting, Santa's photo booth. Raffle off gift

					certificates or gift of choice Staff or Board: Contact Gina Seyfried for more information. 410-964-9329 or gina.seyfried@kidspeac.org
STRATEGY	GOALS (dollar amount and response)	TARGET AUDIENCE	DESCRIPTION	WHE N	WHO
WEAA Community Cares Program	\$500 and 50 new donors	Corporate Donors/Sponsors, Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	Community Cares program spotlights non-profit organizations to present their services and offerings, thereby allowing a broader platform to reach more people in the community and to highlight the mission, values and contribution to the community at the heart of these organizations.	October 2016	Board and/or other volunteers: Email request for nomination, details about the organization and a phone number to Sandi Mallory, sandra.cooper@morgan.edu <i>Winners are chosen monthly</i>
Baltimore's Farmers' Market & Bazaar	\$1,000 and 100 new donors	Friends and family of board members, Previous Donors, New Donors	The bazaar offers shoppers a variety of unique crafts and collectibles. Many Sundays also feature live music performances and cooking demonstrations.	November 2016	Staff, Board, & other volunteers: Greet individuals and tell them about SCA. Provide hands-on arts & crafts activities for kids; face painting; Santa's photo booth; Cooking with Santa
	Total Funds Raised: \$33,230 Total New Donors: 700				

Works Cited

- "Charitable Giving Statistics." *Charitable Giving Statistics*. National Philanthropic Trust, n.d. Web. 1 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.nptrust.org/philanthropic-resources/charitable-giving-statistics/>>.
- Hooker, Lauren. "8 Reasons Your Business Needs a Cohesive, Well-Designed Brand." *Elleandcompanydesign.com*. 11 Aug. 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015. <www.elleandcompanydesign.com/blog/2015/8/11/8-reasons-your-business-needs-a-cohesive-well-designed-brand>.
- Kylander, N., & Stone, C. (2012). The role of brand in the nonprofit sector. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 10(2), 36-41. <<http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.proxy-ub.researchport.umd.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=e2850af7-c88b-401e-a707-d2270f656473%40sessionmgr120&vid=7&hid=126>>.
- Neumeier, Marty. *Zag*. Berkeley: New Riders, 2007. Print.
- Neumeier, M. *Zag*. Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2007. Kindle Fire.
- Stein, Caryn. "3 Ways to Encourage Monthly Giving." Web log post. *The Nonprofit Marketing Blog*. Network for Good, 25 June 2012. Web. 15 Oct. 2015. <www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/3-ways-encourage-monthly-giving>.
- Ungarino, Rebecca. "For More Poor Americans, Smartphones Are Lifelines." *CNBC.com*. 1 Apr. 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.cnbc.com/2015/04/01/for-more-poor-americans-smartphones-are-lifelines.html>>.
- Whitney, Lance. "Amazon Third-party Vendors Sold More than 2 Billion Items in 2014." *Cnet.com*. 5 Jan. 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015. <<http://www.cnet.com/news/amazon-third-party-vendors-sold-more-than-2-billion-items-in-2014/>>.
- Zorzini, Catalin. "The State of Online Shopping in 2015." *Ecommerce Platforms*. 2 June 2015. Web. 30 Nov. 2015. <<http://ecommerce-platforms.com/ecommerce-news/state-online-shopping-2015>>.

Readability References

1. Siddhartha, R., Phetxumphou, K., Dietrich, A., Estabrooks, P., You, W., & Davy, B. (2015). An evaluation of the Readability of water quality reports: national assessment. *Journal of Water and Health, 13*(3), 645-653.
2. Kunz, M. B., & Osborne, P. (2010). A Preliminary Examination of the Readability of Consumer Pharmaceutical Web Pages. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness, 5*(1), 33-42. Retrieved from Coleman Lian Index.
3. Small, r., Platania, J., & Cutler, B. (2013, February). Assessing the Readability of Capital Pattern Jury Instructions. *Jury Expert, 25*(1), 18-22. Retrieved from Academic Search Complete (85354556).
4. Delgado, C., & Weitzel, M. Reading and comprehension levels in a sample of urban, low-income persons. *Health Education Journal, 72*(3), 345-350. Retrieved from sagepub.co.uk
5. Fante, R., Jacobi, L., & Sexton, V. (2013, June). The Effects of Instant Messaging and Task Difficulty on Reading Comprehension. *North American Journal of Psychology, 15*(2), 287-298. Retrieved from Discovery Service for Langsdale Library (87531065).
6. Gerstle, A. J. (2010). A Case Study Analyzing the Reading Levels of Print and Electronic Health Education Material for Health Consumers with Low Levels of Literacy.
7. Trivedi, H., Trivedi, A., & Hannon, M. (2014). Reading and Comprehensibility of Over-The -Counter Medication labels. *Informa Healthcare, 36*(3), 473-477.
8. Snow, S. (2015, January 28). /this-surprising-reading-level-analysis-will-change-the-way-you-write/. In *contently.com*. Retrieved from <https://contently.com/strategist/2015/01/28/this-surprising-reading-level-analysis-will-change-the-way-you-write/>