To: Erika Paterson

From: Meredith Gillespie

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Subject: A Proposal to Increase the Number of Volunteers at the Vancouver Police Museum

**Introduction**

The Vancouver Police Museum, founded in 1986, is an independent museum. It strives to educate the public about the rich history of Vancouver’s law enforcement, the Coroner’s Services and the City Analyst Laboratory. Since the museum is small, it must apply for grants to finance the educational programs and tours it provides. The limited budget the museum has at its disposal means it relies on a small number of permanent staff and a large base of volunteers. Volunteers are organized by the museum Curator, who is the primary audience of this proposal. She is also the reader of the final report, along with the museum Director. The secondary audience of this proposal is the technical writing instructor, Erika Paterson.

In recent years, the museum has struggled to attract and maintain volunteers. The immediate cause of this problem is a lack of publicity. Given the museum’s small size and limited budget contribute to this insufficient publicity. The fact that this volunteer work is specific and volunteers should ideally have an interest in curatorial work or artefact preservation are distant causes of the problem. Volunteers ordinarily also work on the weekend and in a relatively dangerous area of Vancouver, the Downtown East Side. This issue will be addressed in the informational interviews of the current volunteers.

**Statement of Problem**

Without volunteers, the museum would cease to function. Volunteers assist with essential services like database management, digital marketing, and artefact maintenance. Crucially, volunteers provide these services free of charge. If the current number of volunteers continues, the museum may have to re-adjust its budget and may not be able to continue providing all of its current services. The curator of the museum is responsible for the volunteers, and the services that volunteers provide benefit her work the most. As such, she is the ideal audience for this proposal. The other aspect of the problem is that volunteers do not continue working at the museum long-term. This is also important as without continual work by volunteers, projects and services come to a standstill.

**Proposed Solution**

One solution I would like to propose to the museum curator is to create a new marketing campaign to attract new volunteers. The new marketing strategy should address the causes of the initial issue. One way of achieving this is to advertise the available volunteer positions to high school and university students with an interest in history. Similarly, stimulating awareness of the museum in these institutions is also important. By advertising the details of the position through university organizations like the UBC Arts Undergraduate Society, the Vancouver Police Museum can expand its reach. One other format for advertising the available positions I would like to suggest to the curator is through social media platforms. Facebook, Instagram and the museum’s websites are all viable formats for attracting new volunteers given that the audience has already demonstrated interest in the museum. The associated costs of any new marketing strategy must also be kept in mind since the museum has a low operating budget.

**Scope**

I would like to narrow my field of inquiry through answering the following questions in my report:

1. What were the most and the least appealing aspects of the position to current and past volunteers?
2. What are the factors which contributed to long-term volunteers’ commitment to the museum?
3. Are there alternative ways in which previous and current volunteers learned about the volunteer position, such as through word of mouth?
4. Which social media platforms were most effective in the past, and how can they be optimized to maximise future reach?
5. Which organizations at high schools and universities in Vancouver would be willing to advertise the volunteer positions?
6. Are any additional costs associated with revamping the marketing method of volunteer positions within the museum’s budgets? If not, what solutions are cost-effective and yet still valuable to pursue?

**Methods**

Firstly, I intend to conduct an in-depth interview with the museum curator. I would like to know what marketing strategies have been the most successful in the past, as well as what the qualifications of an ideal volunteer are. I will then use a causal analysis method to obtain feedback from the current and previous volunteers. After consideration of different forms of completing primary research, I will conduct informational interviews and surveys. The informational interviews will provide original information from current and past volunteers on how they learned about the position and what the most and least attractive elements of the position were. I will create two surveys, one for the current volunteers and one for the previous volunteers. The surveys will provide valuable personal data about the volunteers such as age range, gender and academic backgrounds. This will be useful in understanding the best target audience for the new marketing strategy. It is important to note that all measures will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the research respondents.

**My Qualifications**

My experience working for the Vancouver Police Museum as a Museum Program Coordinator allowed me to gain a full understanding of the responsibilities of both full-time staff and volunteers. I currently have professional relationships with both the Museum Director and Museum Curator. These connections will allow me to facilitate the surveys and informational interviews more easily.

**Conclusion**

The problem of insufficient volunteers at the Vancouver Police Museum is severe. Without volunteers, the museum may be forced to re-arrange its budget to accommodate full-time staff on weekends. It may even have to close its doors for good. With a new marketing strategy designed to increase the supply of long-term volunteers, the museum can continue its education about Vancouver’s fascinating law enforcement history.