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## Support for Pets Searching for Their Forever Home

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MDS 495 Capstone Project

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### Abstract

For my capstone, I chose to align with the Idaho Humane Society. I wanted to select a community service project so that years from now, I could look back on this capstone and be proud of the difference I could make. The goal was to bring awareness to our communities' needs for pets that are still looking for a forever home and assist with some of their immediate needs such as food, toys, and blankets.

I networked in my personal, professional, and social groups to collect donations in the form of cash, pet food, pet treats, pet toys, blankets, and towels. I was able to organize in the community to be collected and make a final donation directly to Idaho Humane Society.

*Keywords:* Community Service, Non-Profit Organization, Fundraiser

## **Introduction to your Capstone Project**

Pets looking for a forever home has always been a problem worth solving in any community. Hence, I chose to complete a community service project that aligned with the Idaho Humane Society, in hope that I could help organize a fundraiser that would make an impact and help local animals. Gathering donations from others would help benefit many animals in need and help get them another step closer to a forever home.

### **Section 1: Innovative Approach**

The Idaho Humane Society has always been a community stronghold. Its mission is to advocate for the care of animals to protect them from neglect, cruelty and promote compassion in the community. Their goals are to find every pet their forever home. Recently, we have been experiencing unprecedented times with COVID-19 and inflation, which has led some to become homeless and forced to part with a beloved family pet. I thought that aligning myself with the Idaho Humane Society for my capstone project would be an innovative approach to providing help to this increasing problem.

“How might I raise donations for the Idaho Humane Society?” seemed like a natural solution to this increasing issue in our community. I planned a community outreach event to organize a pet food, pet toy, and cash donation event to help offset the budgetary restrictions that exist from the Idaho Humane Society and raise community awareness.

### **Section 2: Emotional Intelligence**

#### **Awareness of Self and Others**

There's a certain level of self-awareness one must possess to think outside of one's immediate needs and look beyond into the community to see where you can make a difference. I first contacted the Idaho Humane Society to verify their interest level of my selecting them for

this capstone project. Their excitement and gratitude confirmed that I had made the correct decision. With my newfound motivation and real-world experience with project management, I was armed with defined goals share my passion for my project with other in my network. I wanted to make the difference by showing skills that gave donors the ability to connect with my cause and inspire them to act by either giving or educating them of the area site location and needs. Things that I learned during this process that helped influence my fundraising abilities were self-awareness, motivation, empathy, social skills, and organizational skills. Understanding that fundraising is a balance between the roles of the donor and the needs of the organization is a key element of success.

The value of this balance of roles makes the difference in having a successful fundraiser or not. It is a risk vs. reward when asking so many to donate cash or items for a fundraiser. I'm happy to report that many rewards were received, and this event was valuable to those who donated as well as to the Idaho Humane Society.

My research and chosen approach to this fundraiser considered the emotional intelligence of those I was going to approach. I used this opportunity as a learning event to educate others on the new Idaho Humane Society and those pets that are looking for a forever home while mentioning my fundraiser and asking for donations.

### **Section 3: Creative Thinking**

#### **The Creative Framework**

I did reference several resources that spoke about and suggested using the "5 Steps to Fuel Fundraising Success." It suggested an integrated approach that confirmed my thinking. After consulting this resource, I decided that my own framework to construct the methodology and approach to this fundraiser was on point. Per Innovaire, before launching a Facebook page or

attempting to master the art of using social media in its limitations you must have a solid understanding of the organization's overall strategy. ("Inno-Fundraising-Future-6.pdf," n.d.). Per Oliver Blanchard, "A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal, a tactic is the means or method by which a strategy is carried out, a goal is the organizations desired end point (also known as an objective), and a target is the specific value assigned to an objective in a finite time frame." (Social Media ROI: Managing and Measuring Social Media Efforts in Your Organization [SOCIAL MEDIA ROI] [Paperback], n.d.).

### **Approach to Project**

I chose a more traditional approach to my professional network and created a workplace poster for the break room areas to advertise my fundraising event. I also chose word of mouth to family and friends in my immediate circle on a personal level. Unlike days long ago, we are in a tech forward thinking environment. I chose to use social media to request donations. I am not a native Idahoan and originally from the East Coast and wanted to maximize my reaching power for this fundraiser.

With this combined approach, I was able to maximize the people in my network and creating multiple ways that were available to donate. This method facilitated those who are tech savvy and those who are more traditional.

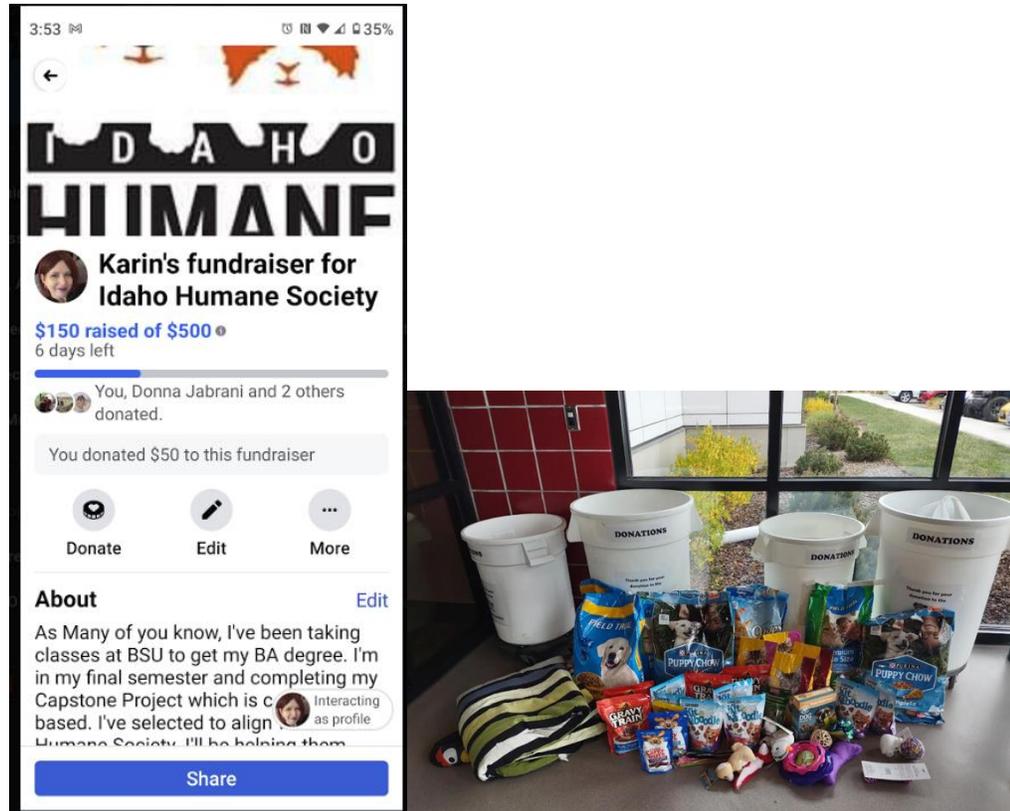
## **Section 4: Your Innovative Solution**

### **Accomplishment**

I set a goal to raise cash donations as well as pet food, pet toys and gently used towels and blankets. I worked on my social to successfully raise \$150.00 in cash donations that went directly to the Idaho Humane Society via their donation link. I collected 15 bags of pet treats (seven cat, eight dog), 13 pet toys (seven cat, six dog), two large bags of puppy food, six large

bags of adult dog food, one bag of kitten food, two bags of adult cat food, and two bags of bunny/hamster food. I also gathered two blankets and 12 towels. I also realized that so many often donate to them without thinking about the human aspect and purchased two packages of cookies for the staff to say thanks for their dedication.

Here are a few pictures of what was gathered for donations.



## Innovative Problem Solving

Throughout this process of fundraising, I thought through the innovative problem-solving techniques that we were taught and adjusted along the way to show continued forward movement to me goal. If I were to approach things again, I would do a couple of things slightly different. I would have started soon as to not feel so rushed to wrap up the fundraiser to gather and report my results. I also would have tried to align with a local business to see if I could have maximized

the results. How you could have approached this problem/ project differently.

I don't know if my solution would be more innovative than others but seems logical given the goal of this fundraiser. I have a passion for helping other and especially animals as they depend significantly on humans for their care and compassion.

## **Section 5: Results**

### **Benefits to Stakeholders**

My accomplishments benefited my stakeholders of the Idaho Humane Society as well as the animals that will benefit from what was collected. I also feel that those secondary stakeholders, those that donated, benefited from my fundraiser because of the feel-good emotion that was obtained from knowing they helped me with my project but also a worthy cause in the community.

### **Impact on Stakeholders**

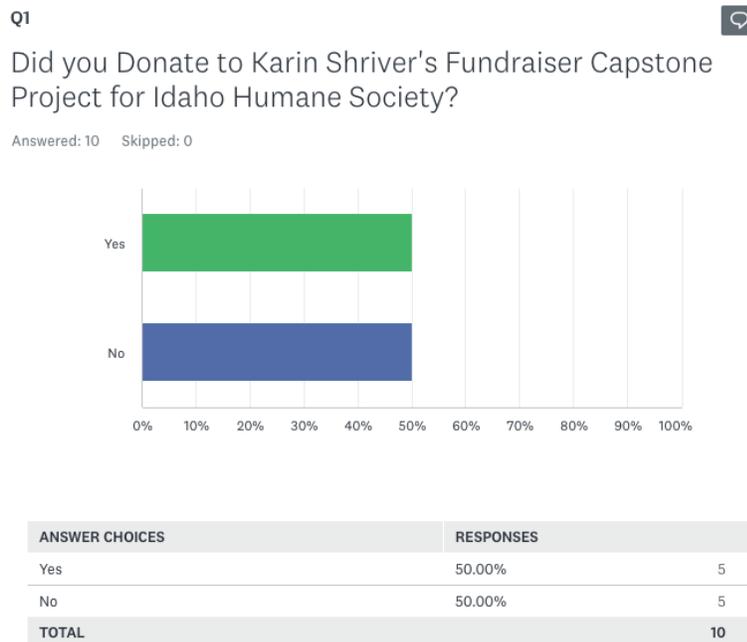
The impact on my stakeholders was both direct and indirect. Both the workers and the animals will be directly impacted because it helps feel a need that exists in the community for donations that helps offset the budgetary restrictions they face when they have an increased number of animals, they are helping that may be above what was accounted for in their budget. It also helps raise awareness in the community that there are animals looking for a forever home. I am very proud to have aligned with the Idaho Humane Society for my capstone project and feel that my outcome was a success and has helped their mission. I knew this topic would be beneficial to me as well as the community. I received such joy and sense of accomplishment with selecting the Idaho Humane Society for my capstone. I am thinking that I will continue this even after this as a part of my annual birthday celebrations. Instead of gift or dinners, I will ask friends to contribute a donation to them instead.

### Section 6: Different Approaches

#### Outcome vs Expectations

I have deliberated on what approaches I could have taken for a different result but don't think that the outcome would have varied much differently. I feel overall my expectations vs my outcome was close. I spoke with the workers that were at the Idaho Humane Society the day that I delivered the items, and they conveyed much appreciation and comments that they hardly have someone fill up their bins to that capacity in one visit. Their support and appreciation were reassuring of my success.

I decided to conduct a survey to provide feedback of how successful my fundraising abilities were as well as gauge future interest. By conducting this online survey after completing the fundraiser, it confirmed my thinking of this being a successful fundraiser. Below, you can see the overview of my survey and. In that survey, I ask five simple questions. Based on the answer to my survey from my peers, colleagues. Friends and family, I would say that my efforts were successful. Here are my results of that survey.

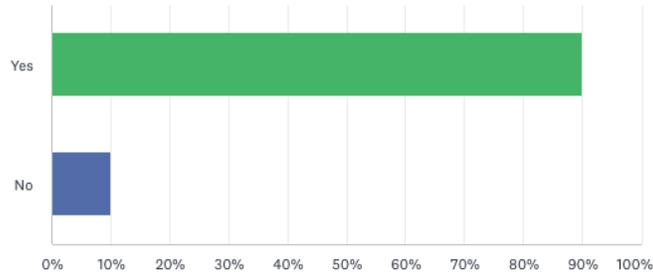


Q2



Did you see the results of the Fundraiser for the Idaho Humane Society that Karin conducted?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



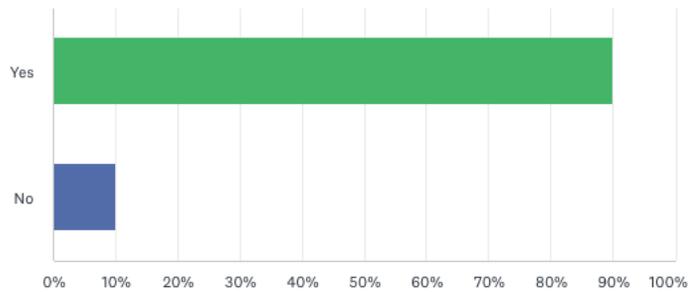
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.00%	9
No	10.00%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

Q3



Have you ever donated to your local Humane Society?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



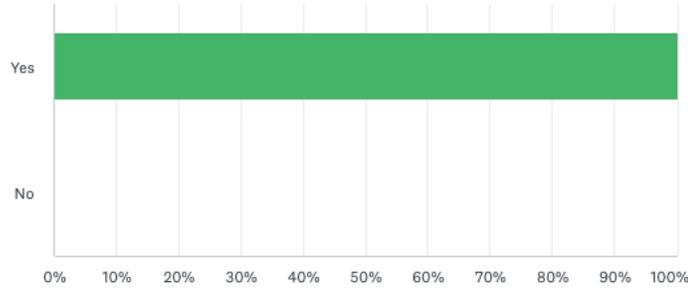
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.00%	9
No	10.00%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

Q4



Do you feel that the donations collected were successful in making a difference for the Idaho Humane Society?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



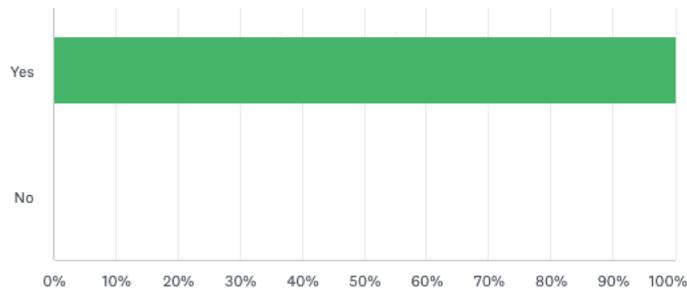
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	100.00% 10
No	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

Q5



Would you participate in a future fundraiser event that Karin organized?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	100.00% 10
No	0.00% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

### **Section 7: Conclusion**

In conclusion, I would review my alignment with the Idaho Humane Society to complete my Capstone project a success. Given this task, again I would align with this partner again. I have enjoyed raising awareness with an innovative approach, collecting donations with creative thinking and emotional intelligence, and presenting the results to the facility. It was a worthy cause and a problem worth solving with my innovative solution to problem solve. I learned critical thinking skills and the ability to project manage on this project in ways that were taught throughout the MDS coursework, so all parties benefited.

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