Cornerstone Initiatives & Events

Projects and programs designed to build effective relationships within the club or federation and greater community. Relationships are established through the club or federation’s work to provide advertising education, celebrate creative excellence, elevate diversity and multicultural initiatives and take an active role in government affairs as it relates to the advertising industry.

This entry should include four sub-categories:

- Advertising Education (Professional, Student, General Public)
- American Advertising Awards
- Diversity & Multicultural Initiatives (Speakers, Workshops/Seminars, Campaigns, Membership Demographics, etc.)
- Government Relations (State Day on the Hill, Speakers, Programs, Club Involvement, etc.)

1. Goals for each initiative

2. Explain how each goal was achieved:
   - Event Details
   - Target Audience
   - Strategy
   - Execution/Tactics

3. Describe, in detail, the results of your program/initiative.
Club Achievement: Cornerstone Initiatives and Events

One of the ways the American Advertising Federation of the Midlands can continue to support advertising interests in the Greater Columbia, SC area, as well as regionally and nationally, is to build effective relationships within our greater community. At the club level, we do this by taking an active role in our local advertising industry, celebrating its achievements, and pushing it to grow and evolve. Our work to provide advertising education, participate in government affairs, as well as showcase our local creative talent and strive to promote and grow diversity within our club and industry is some of the most important work we can do as a club. In fact these tenants are woven throughout the American Advertising Federation Mission statement and are crucial components of our local AAF of the Midlands objectives. In the paragraphs below we highlight these four areas of importance to our local club and the challenges we faced and strides we made throughout the 2019-2020 year.

Advertising Education

Educational outreach is more than just providing education opportunities to club members already in the industry, though that certainly plays a role. Our local club home base is also home to our state university, the University of South Carolina. Engaging with students not only helps to grow our industry but provides fresh talent and creativity to our local talent. Educating the general public, interested students, and advertising and marketing professionals is one of the simplest ways to garner support for our industry, both from inside the advertising community and out.

Goal 1: Encourage students to seek a career in advertising and join AAF through our events as well as the National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC) and Student Advertising Federation (SAF)

Tactics:

- Presented opportunities for students to become involved in AAF
○ Attend free Life After Work events (typically networking events during happy hour), monthly lunch and learn, American Advertising Award entries, National Student Advertising Competition and more

● Spoke with our Student Advertising Federation on multiple occasions about membership
● Board members presented in front of six different classes
  ○ Sent out a membership email to students
  ○ Sent American Advertising Awards entry email to faculty with students who make creative work
  ○ Posted flyers about the American Advertising Awards around campus

Results: We increased student exposure by hosting judging for the American Advertising Awards at the university, where students volunteered and saw firsthand how the judges discussed and evaluated more than 200 entries. Student entries in the American Advertising Awards this year were up almost 10 percent. Our discussion with students this year showed that student membership is low due to the cost. In an effort to increase participation next year, we are evaluating options to remove this barrier either by lowering the cost or seeking corporate sponsorships to cover students’ membership fees.

Our workshop hosted by local AAF of the Midlands members for SAF was rescheduled for April 2020 to educate students on AAF of the Midlands and recruit them into membership. This was originally planned as a face-to-face meeting but is now reorganized as a virtual meeting through Zoom due to COVID-19. The University of South Carolina participated in this year’s National Student Advertising Competition once more, and AAF of the Midlands assisted by helping students gather data, including Using state-of-the-art biometric technology while interviewing club members. The team was conducting an experiment to better understand advertising and media professionals’ attitudes toward ad tech. Due to COVID-19, changes were made and the project will be completed and submitted on April 1. The students will submit their video presentation and receive questions from the judges on April 2.
Goal 2: Work with Mosaic Chair to expand our diversity and inclusion efforts to include students

Tactics: On October 17, 2019, members of our Mosaic sub-committee\(^1\text{A}\) spent the afternoon at Columbia High, a local school that has a large number of minority students. In order to empower more students of color to begin considering careers and majors in advertising, the group participated in the Communities in Schools Career and College Fair\(^1\text{B}\). Students were able to ask questions about careers in advertising, broadcasting, and more and were also provided with collateral that featured in-state colleges offering communications-related majors for them to explore\(^1\text{C}\).

Results: Most of the students of color we spoke to said they were now more likely to consider exploring majors and, eventually, careers in advertising.

Goal 3: Provide quality education opportunities to advertising professionals, with a focus on improving their craft and receiving much deserved recognition for it.

Tactics/Results: In addition to our monthly lunch and learns, AAF of the Midlands collaborated with AAF national and district programming to offer several free educational opportunities throughout the year for club members and non-members alike, including: Advertising Ethics Webinar (October)\(^2\text{A}\), American Advertising Awards Workshop Webinar (December)\(^2\text{B}\), Crisis Communications During the Coronavirus Webinar (April)\(^2\text{C}\).

American Advertising Awards

The American Advertising Awards Competition and Gala play a crucial role not only in the visibility and growth of our industry throughout our region but also, in a very pragmatic sense, as a major fundraiser - supporting a variety of efforts that would otherwise be unattainable. With this in mind, this year’s committee members approached the planning and execution of the gala with a clear-eyed vision toward overall growth. We set out to heighten the event’s reputation as a must-attend experience, to grow attendance and revenue, and even get a headstart on interest for next year’s event.
Goal 1: Increase the number of entries received, which would support our club financially and contribute to our goal of building the prestige associated with winning in a more competitive environment.

Tactics: Working with our Communications Chair, we increased our social media and e-newsletter communications to get the word out about the competition. We also focused on showcasing previous winners and a diverse group of winners. In-house marketing teams are a significant portion of our club and local industry, and it was important to showcase that they have an opportunity to win when competing against local agencies. Additional communication efforts included Call for Entry postcards, which were available as take-aways at all events leading up to the competition deadline and mailed to club members. Additionally this year we chose to mail entry cards to all entrants from the past two years of competitions. In addition to postcards, special Call for Entry gifts were hand-delivered to our corporate members. These gifts matched the theme of the gala to build excitement for the event and encourage entries.

Finally, we participated in two workshops targeted towards professionals and students about the awards and how to enter. This year we opted to host an in-person workshop at the University to specifically reach University of South Carolina students. This workshop focused on how to enter but also provided information to the students about the award process as a whole. For professionals, in-person workshops have been poorly attended in recent years, so we opted to host a webinar workshop instead. Our club reached out to the district Awards Chair for suggestions of someone to lead the workshop, and as a result the district decided to host a joint webinar for every club in our district. AAF of the Midlands promoted the webinar to our club, and a recording was made available for those who couldn’t attend.

Results:

- Increase in number of entries: A 66 percent increase in the total number of professional entries and a 9 percent increase in student entries. (196 professional entries in 2020, 118 entries in 2019)
- Increase in the number of early entries: 32 professional entries were entered before the end of 2019 compared to 24 the prior year, a 33 percent increase.

**Goal 3:** Build upon the prestige associated with winning an ADDY and attending the American Advertising Awards Gala.

**Tactics:** After reviewing feedback from the prior year, we moved away from using a theme for the décor and marketing efforts and instead advertised the event as a true award show, celebrating the best of the best in the marketing world of the Midlands region. We also added a VIP cocktail hour, a live emcee, elevated the dress code to black tie optional, and chose simple, classy decor.

**Goal 4:** Increase the demand for tickets to the American Advertising Awards Gala as one of the top events to attend in the region year after year.

**Tactics:** When planning for the event, we changed marketing and graphics to represent an event that would be considered more high-end and prestigious. We used rich colors and an art-deco font with simple background textures for all social media and printed materials. We also limited the inventory of tickets for reserved tables and VIP tickets so that they would be in demand for the following year. Through our graphics, we communicated limited tickets via social media in order to create a sense of urgency. A few weeks before the gala, we held a Preview Party where we displayed all entries, whether they won an award or not. This gave all entrants the opportunity to feel like their work was special. Plus, it allowed us to showcase the large number of entries and reinforce that many people would be looking for tickets. Beyond the main event, we created “winners books” to display all of the winning entries and gave a copy to every attendee. We also planned an official after party at one of Columbia’s most beloved bars in order to increase word of mouth for people within and outside of the marketing community. After the event, we utilized professional photography that was taken at the event to showcase the number of attendees and “wow” moments of the night, which will serve as our teaser for the 2021 awards.
Results: Survey results were very positive⁵, and every attendee that took the survey indicated that they were likely to return to the event again next year. While the decision not to have a theme had mixed reviews, the overall sentiment was very positive for the venue and décor. After seeing the survey results, we noticed that there was overwhelming positivity for having a live emcee, as opposed to a voiceover. We did have a couple of AV issues. In the future, the technology and layout of the presentation will be reviewed to to limit these issues while showing off the winning entries in a more efficient way.

Diversity and Multicultural Initiatives

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are often viewed as areas in need of improvement in communications and advertising, and our club is no different. According to Forbes, 3 percent of all creative directors are women, and less than 0.1 percent of creative agencies are founded by women. One study found that “African Americans/Blacks are only 6 percent of the industry, Hispanics/Latinos only 8 percent and Asians only 10 percent.”

We questioned as a board how we can combat those statistics and raise awareness so that students and professionals alike would be able to see other cultures working in their realms and feel as though their voices are valid in these same spaces. After realizing that we had no hard data on racial and gender representation in our local club, we added optional fields to our membership application⁵ to begin the process of creating a baseline for the goals mentioned below. From there, our board and club membership were able to become more diverse in those who have been engaged with us throughout the year.

Goal 1: Increase diversity of judges for American Advertising Awards.

Tactics: One of the ways we wanted to represent diversity for our local club is in one of the most misunderstood processes—judging for the American Advertising Awards. We have received feedback from members in the past that the judging process can be confusing. In an effort to increase transparency, we tried to give entrants a better idea of how it all works. Although the smaller size of our market can make it challenging to recruit the highest quality judges, this overall sense of confusion made it more
important than ever to pull from a diverse group of judges so our local industry felt represented. We specifically recruited volunteer judges with a demographic makeup similar to our club and local industry. For us, this meant ensuring that our group of three judges included at least one female judge and at least one African American. We were able to achieve this in part because of our club’s reputation for an enjoyable judging experience, as well as through early and specific recruitment of individuals who met our criteria.

Results: Recruitment of a diverse group of judges ensured different perspectives and experiences were present throughout the entire judging process, making it not only a smooth and enjoyable experience, but one where we feel all entries were examined from multiple angles and given the level of consideration we ourselves would have provided. It was also important for us to increase transparency around the judging process, and we made it a point to highlight our panel of judges and their backgrounds during our American Advertising Awards Gala.

Goal 2: Increase diversity in among our lunch and learn speakers throughout the year

Tactics: In an effort to diversify the programming of our monthly luncheons and Life After Work events, the Mosaic sub-committee and board members focused on providing space for people of color who are in the advertising realm to present on subject matters that aligned with the mission of the club. In our previous fiscal year, our six luncheons featured one person of color and one female. This year, our slate of six luncheons included two women and three persons of color. Our efforts are also being furthered through an evening professional development event via our Life After Work series.

Goal 3: Host a MLK Jr. Day of Champions Event to Promote Diversity & Inclusion in Advertising

Tactics: Historically, our club has collaborated with the University of South Carolina for their annual Martin Luther King Day Breakfast of Champions event, which invites minority students at the university and those who are attending women-only or historically black collegiate institutions to become immersed in programming that allowed these students to glean from the knowledge of professionals in their future
fields. We had created an invitation and secured speakers for the event, but in November the university decided that they couldn’t support the event this year due to administrative issues, so the event was canceled. We hope to bring this initiative back on Martin Luther King Day 2021.

In lieu of the Day of Champions 2020 event, our club will be assisting with the University of South Carolina’s Digital Media Academy. Select students, enrolled at a historically black college or university in North or South Carolina, who apply for this program are able to spend a week with the staff of the university and other leaders in the communications field. We are currently in the planning stages of the event. The plan was to host an event at the University on May 20, 2020, however, the University has closed campus for the remainder of the spring, and we look forward to rescheduling at a later date.

**Government Relations**

Government Relations is a central service of the American Advertising Federation and one that changes from year to year depending on legislation facing the industry.

**Goal:** It is our role to educate our members on legislation, both favorable and adverse, and from time to time spearhead proactive and defensive actions. In addition, we promote civic engagement and social responsibility among our members as well as industry self-regulation.

Government Relations is likely the most unpredictable area of responsibility from one year to the next.

**Tactics:** This year’s focus for Government Relations is monitoring state legislation that runs counter to our industry’s interests. This year House Bill 4532 is being closely monitored. The legislation is currently in the House Ways and Means Committee. The bill proposes a sales tax on services, including advertising and professional services within the advertising industry.

**Results:** AAF of the Midlands Government Relations Chair, Phil Bailey, has been monitoring H. 4532 throughout the 2019 and 2020 South Carolina Legislative Session. He has provided regular updates and guidance to the AAF of the Midlands’ Board of Directors. Currently, the bill is stuck in committee and appears unlikely to become a priority for the remainder of 2020.
Exhibit 1: Mosaic Committee Student Outreach

**SEE YOURSELF IN A CAREER IN ADVERTISING**

**Advertising, Diversity and You**

Advertising is a fast-paced, exciting industry that needs people like you. People who are working in this field and creating each of the pieces — from commercials to social media ads to billboards. While these people play an important role in shaping our society, around 100 MILLION PEOPLE (6%) do not see themselves portrayed in advertising and scripted media.

When people recognize themselves in a message, they are more likely to respond. Up to 85% of people pointed to better representation of the modern society as the reason marketing campaigns were impactful in positive way. Most Americans (44%) find diversity in advertising important. In fact, 51% of consumers said they are more likely to trust brands that show more diversity in their ads.

And while Americans are more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past, this lack of representation causes a lack of diversity in the advertising profession.

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<tr>
<th>Advertising and Public Relations Demographics</th>
<th>General Population Demographics</th>
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**You could be the next advertising professional that brings inclusion to the table!**

**What Kind of Job Can You Get?**

Any one of these jobs can get you up for an awesome career in advertising! There are all kinds of fields that you could go into by being a sales representative to a graphic designer.

**Management**
- Account Executive
- Account Manager
- Advertising Director
- Creative Director
- Client Services
- Integrated Services
- Production Manager
- Sales Manager
- Social Media Manager
- Traffic Director
- Traffic Manager

**Marketing**
- Account Coordinator
- Account Manager
- Road Manager
- Client Strategist
- Content Strategist
- Sales
- Sales Manager
- Traffic Manager
- Traffic Manager

**Creative**
- Art Director
- Copywriter
- Creative Director
- Graphic Designer
- Illustrator
-Photographer
- Producer
- Artist
- Web Designer

**Sales**
- Account Manager
- Account Executive
- Public Relations Specialist

**Where Can You Work?**

While the specifics of many of these jobs may vary, there are three primary options: in-house, agency and freelance.

- **In-house** refers to conducting an activity or operations within a company, instead of relying on outsourcing. This occurs when a company has its own employees and time to keep marketing and communications work produced.
- **Agency** is typically referred to as a creative agency or an agency; this type of business is dedicated to creating, planning, and managing advertising and sometimes other forms of promotion and marketing for its clients.
- **Freelance/Contract** means a person who is self-employed and is contracted to a specific employer long-term and can work on a project by project basis.

**So Where Do You Start?**

After high school, you should plan on attending a four-year university and working on a degree that pertains to advertising. There are dozens of majors you could consider, depending on your personal interests, including advertising, marketing, public relations, visual communications, mass communications, English, journalism and graphic design. Here are some examples of degrees and majors that are offered right here in South Carolina.

- Anderson University
  - Digital Media
  - Fine Arts
- Benedict College
  - Marketing
- CofC
  - Communication Studies
- Cullins University
  - Media Communications
- Clemson University
  - Communication
  - Digital Marketing
- Coastal Carolina University
  - Communication
  - Design
- College of Charleston
  - Communication
  - Design
- Columbia College
  - Graphic Design
  - Communication
- Erskine College
  - English
- Furman University
  - Communication
  - Media
- Lander University
  - English
- Mass Communication
- Visual Arts
- North Carolina Central University
  - Marketing
- University of South Carolina
  - Creative Writing
- Writing
- University of SC
  - Advertising
  - Creative Writing
  - English
- University of SC
  - Communication
  - Design
- Marketing
- Mass Communications
- Visual Arts

- Winthrop University
  - Digital Information Design
  - English
  - Journalism
  - Marketing
  - Mass Communication
  - Visual Arts
- Wofford College
  - English
- VCU
  - English
  - Mass Communications
Exhibit 2: Educational Opportunities

A

Today is FreeAdEthicsDay! Don't forget to take advantage of this FREE 90-minute certificate course presented by the Institute for Advertising Ethics' Wally Snyder. There are time slots offered throughout the day, so you still have time to sign up!
http://ow.ly/6E350w48tF

B

Last chance to join us for #AAAwardsfordummies! Learn the ins and outs of entering the American Advertising Awards. Don’t miss our FREE webinar TOMORROW, Dec. 4th at 12pm EST to learn how to submit your work for the #AAAwards.

C

This webinar is limited to 100 viewers but we’ll send out a recording of the webinar afterwards. Hope you are all safe and sound!

Crisis Communications During the Coronavirus
Learning as we go - relying on what we know

Wed, Mar 18
Crisis Communications During the Coronavirus
https://zoom.us/j/8915555866
Danielle Salley invited you
Exhibit 3: American Advertising Awards Collateral

**The American Advertising Awards**

**CALL FOR ENTRIES NOW OPEN!**

**DID YOU SAY VIP?**

**See You Thursday at the Preview Party!**

**Art Bar • 5:30 p.m.**

**Tickets Available Now!**

Calling all advertisers, marketers and creatives! Your Gala is just around the corner. Tickets for the American Advertising Awards Gala are now on sale. We have so much awesome work to show this year that we expect it to be a sold out event. Get your tickets while you can!

Did you hear about the speakeasy? This year for the American Advertising Awards Gala, there will be a VIP Speakeasy that includes early event entry, champagne, hors d'oeuvres and, of course, rubbing elbows with the best of the best creatives and advertisers in Columbia. Sound good to you? Then grab your VIP tickets today!

**American Advertising Awards Gala**

1208 Washington Place  
Saturday, February 22  
General Entry • 7 p.m.  
VIP Entry • 6 p.m.

**Thank you to our generous sponsors:**

Chernoff Newman - Student Best in Show Sponsor  
Grace Outdoor - Professional Best in Show Sponsor  
WIS TV - Bar Sponsor
Exhibit 4: American Advertising Awards Event Photos
Exhibit 5: Survey Feedback from Gala

Entry #2
SATISFACTION OF EVENT
Overall, how would you rate this event?
GOOD

What did you like about the event?
Great food, great chance to mingle and to see the positive work others have done. Great venue - I would do it again.

What did you dislike about the event?
I believe the layout of attendees (as well as all the food for events). But we had a table for our company with a few people like myself who don't understand some of the terminology/ambience. I would hope to see a more wide variety. That would generate more excitement and make it a good investment for our team/company. Also, the in-game is too much for me but there would be a good thing to do for next year.

**Did you purchase a VIP ticket?**
Yes
**If so, what did you think of the VIP experience?**
Very nicely done.

LENGTH OF EVENT
Nice the event length too long, too short or about right?
About right

BOARD MEMBERS/COMMITTEE MEMBERS
How helpful were the board and committee members?
Very helpful

EVENT PRESENTATION
Did you feel you received the right amount of information prior to the event?
Perfect Amount

Do you plan on attending our next event?
Yes
Are you currently a member of AAI?
Yes
Do you have any other feedback about the event?
None very very very good.

Entry #6
SATISFACTION OF EVENT
Overall, how would you rate this event?
Very Good

What did you like about the event?
Well planned, great food, enjoyed the VIP room. Really great to have the Awards booklet, love that!

What did you dislike about the event?
A couple hicups in the presentation, but nothing too bad. I do wish it was earlier in the evening.

**Did you purchase a VIP ticket?**
Yes
**If so, what did you think of the VIP experience?**
Great!

LENGTH OF EVENT
Was the event length too long, too short or about right?
About right

BOARD MEMBERS/COMMITTEE MEMBERS
How helpful were the board and committee members?
Extremely helpful

EVENT PROMOTION
Did you feel you received the right amount of information prior to the event?
Perfect Amount

Do you plan on attending our next event?
Yes
Are you currently a member of AAI?
Yes
Do you have any other feedback about the event?

Entry #4
SATISFACTION OF EVENT
Overall, how would you rate this event?
Very Good

What did you like about the event?
Beautiful venue, excellent food and I loved seeing everyone so dressed up.

What did you dislike about the event?

**Did you purchase a VIP ticket?**
Yes
**If so, what did you think of the VIP experience?**
Very nice to be able to get in early, cool space for it.

LENGTH OF EVENT
Was the event length too long, too short or about right?
About right

BOARD MEMBERS/COMMITTEE MEMBERS
How helpful were the board and committee members?
Very helpful

EVENT PROMOTION
Did you feel you received the right amount of information prior to the event?
Perfect Amount

Do you plan on attending our next event?
Yes
Are you currently a member of AAI?
Yes
Do you have any other feedback about the event?

Entry #9
SATISFACTION OF EVENT
Overall, how would you rate this event?
Very Good

What did you like about the event?
Great food, great presentation, and wonderful people. The venue was very nice.

What did you dislike about the event?
Parking was probably the worst part, but that really wasn't bad at all either.

**Did you purchase a VIP ticket?**
Yes
**If so, what did you think of the VIP experience?**
Great! Loved the beer selection.

LENGTH OF EVENT
Was the event length too long, too short or about right?
About right

BOARD MEMBERS/COMMITTEE MEMBERS
How helpful were the board and committee members?
Extremely helpful

EVENT PROMOTION
Did you feel you received the right amount of information prior to the event?
Perfect Amount

Do you plan on attending our next event?
Yes
Are you currently a member of AAI?
Yes
Do you have any other feedback about the event?
It was a lot of fun—thank you!
Exhibit 6: Membership Form

Membership Form

Name *
First
Last

Company *

Email *

Job Title

Phone *

Address *
Address Line 1
Address Line 2
City
State
Zip Code

Membership Level *

Committees
Please check one or any committees you have an interest in joining or learning more about and we will contact you with more details!

Interested Committees
☐ Programs
☐ Life After Work
☐ Public Service
☐ Government Relations
☐ American Advertising Awards - Gala
☐ Diversity
☐ Oyster Roast
☐ Membership
☐ Communications

Demographic Information
This section is completely voluntary. In an effort to better serve you and to create a welcoming and diverse environment for all advertising and communications professionals, we would like to know a little bit more about our membership. Please respond to any questions you feel comfortable answering.

Age
☐ 18 – 25
☐ 25 – 35
☐ 36 – 45
☐ 46 – 55
☐ 56 – 55
☐ 65+

Gender
☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other

Ethnicity
☐ White or Caucasian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Native American or American Indian
☐ Asian or Pacific Islander
☐ Biracial
☐ Other

Education
☐ Less than High School
☐ High School Diploma or GED
☐ Associates Degree
☐ Bachelor's Degree
☐ Masters Degree
☐ Doctorate Degree

Employment
☐ Agency
☐ In House
☐ Freelance/Contract/Self-Employed
☐ Business Owner
☐ Other
Meet Our Judges

Clay Prewitt
KNOXVILLE, TN

Stephanie Kelly
NASHVILLE, TN

Sherman Winfield
ATLANTA, GA
Exhibit 8: Calendar of Events with Speakers

Jennifer Sutton  
Bright + CO Marketing  
September Speaker

Yeosh Bendayan  
Push Button Audio  
January Speaker

Tiffany Andrews  
Myrtle Beach Convention Center  
February Speaker

David Oakley  
BooneOakley  
March Speaker  
(rescheduled for June)

Shane Santiago  
Bravely  
April Speaker  
(rescheduled for fall 2020)

Ryan Beck  
Beck Digital  
May Speaker
Interested in a career in advertising, marketing or communications? Join us for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Champions! Whether you are entering college or ready to start your career, you will learn from those who are experts in their fields of advertising, broadcasting, graphic design, and more.

REGISTER TODAY AT
HTTPS://FORM.JOTFORM.COM/UOFSC_CMCIS/MLK-DAY-OF-CHAMPIONS

Monday, January 20
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
University of SC
School of Journalism & Mass Communications
800 Sumter Street
Columbia, SC 29201