

AAF Midlands Club Achievement: Programs 2022-23

1. State your club's overall program goals and provide a calendar of the year's programs:

Goal 1: Provide diversity in program offerings (including speakers, topics, and areas of expertise).

Goal 2: Increase year-round engagement opportunities with Life After Work events and build back post pandemic to fully in-person luncheons.

As the year ends, we reflect on the success of our program goals at AAF Midlands. We are proud to have accomplished three key objectives: promoting diversity in program offerings, increasing engagement opportunities, and fostering connections between members. Due to some challenges with our board last year, our educational programming had been managed by the executive committee and vice president, without a dedicated board chair managing this crucial element of our membership offerings. With that large roadblock out of the way thanks to the appointment of two strong co-chairs dedicated solely to programming, we turned our focus to ensuring that the programming we offered was engaging and served the full breadth of our diverse membership. (Exhibit 1)

Throughout the year, we delivered a diverse range of programs, including our popular Lunch and Learn series. Our speakers brought a wealth of expertise from various industries, offering fresh perspectives on topics ranging from social media trends to the role of generational trends in advertising. We were intentional about being inclusive with our speakers, ensuring that presenters were indicative of our diverse membership. We also prioritized providing a variety of Life After Work events, allowing members to connect in fun, relaxed settings.

Our increased focus on engagement opportunities paid off, with high attendance at our in-person luncheons. These events allowed members to build deeper relationships and learn from each other in a more intimate setting.

Finally, we are pleased to see the connections between members strengthen due to our efforts. We witnessed new collaborations, mentorship opportunities, and even friendships forming between members of our community.

Date	Type	Topic	Presenter
August	Kickoff	N/A	AAF Midlands
September	Life After Work	Speed Networking	AAF Midlands
October	Lunch and Learn (Virtual)	“Get A Life!”	Leigh Farrior, Stamp Idea Group
November	Fundraiser	Low Country Boil	AAF Midlands
December	Life After Work	Jingle Mingle	AAF, PRSA, AMA, IABC
December	Lunch and Learn	“Brand Connection Through Personalization & Self-Creation”	Simone Jackson, Spotify
January	Lunch and Learn	“24 Tactics, Templates, and Tips to Help You Own and Crush Your Marketing Role”	Laura Laire, Laire Digital Marketing
February	Lunch and Learn	“Improving Brand Identity Through Content”	Adam Constantine, ACE Creatives
March	Lunch and Learn	“Tough Talk About Generations”	Dean Browell, at Feedback
April	Lunch and Learn	“Guiding Brands to Intentional Inclusivity”	David Gacsco, Hierarchy
May	Life After Work	End of Year Social	AAF Midlands

2. Describe three of your most successful programs. For each program, please explain how you achieved your goals by describing the event details, target audience, method of promotion, average attendance, feedback mechanism, and results.

Program 1 - AAF Membership Kickoff the Savage Craft Ale Works

The AAF Membership Kickoff Event at Savage Craft Ale Works was a resounding success in attendance and membership growth. We aimed to kick off the new year with a bang and attract new members to our community. During COVID, membership levels dropped initially, and to combat that, we reduced costs in an attempt to recruit more members. This tactic worked, but we were now faced with the challenge to retain those members, an even harder task coupled with our raised membership rates to combat inflation and rising costs of events. We decided to host a kick off event, celebrating the beginning of our new year, welcoming back existing members and encouraging new ones to come out to this free event and get to know the club and members. We knew engagement at the event would be critical to welcoming new groups, and to achieve this, we created a networking bingo game that helped break the ice and foster conversations among attendees. (Exhibit 2).

We promoted the event through our website and social media channels, targeting professionals in the advertising and marketing industries. (Exhibit 3) We also sent several emails to our current and past membership lists, inviting them to attend and renew their memberships, including a personalized email which garnered attention and responses even from members who could not attend! (Exhibit 4-5).

Overall, we had 71 tickets reserved in advance, with more walk-ins the day of the event. This was a significant increase (42%) over the 50 tickets we reserved for the previous year's kickoff. Additionally, a concern with free events is that people will reserve tickets but not attend. We were pleased to find that we also had an increase in actual attendance. Just shy of 50% of ticket holders actually attended kickoff in 2021, whereas our 2022 event saw 70% of ticket holders attend. Coupled with the additional attendees who walked-in on event day without reserving a ticket in advance, we hit over 100% of our planned attendees and had to increase food and beverage counts at the last minute.

On event day, we renewed several memberships and welcomed many new members into our community, exceeding our expectations. (Exhibits 6-7) We also used the event as an opportunity to tease our theme for the American Advertising Awards, garnering interest in the event and competition early. (Exhibit 8). Finally we were pleased to see several past presidents in attendance at the event! It can often be a challenge to engage past board leadership but several came out to show their support for the new

year. (Exhibit 9). We felt the event was a huge success for our club and the board felt it was a great indication of the events we had to come! (Exhibit 10).

Program 2 - Life After Work - Speed Networking

In an effort to increase membership engagement in a post-Covid world, our club aimed to offer more evening events in addition to our Lunch and Learn series. The intentionality of our Life After Work series showcases AAF Midland's commitment to member inclusivity by providing programs at various times during the day, as our membership ranges in all ages, interests and stages of life. Our first Life After Work event was held at Publico, a local restaurant and bar in the budding Bull Street District. We used the first gathering as a networking tool for existing and potential members who are a part of the communications community in Columbia. Rather than simply host a happy hour, however, as the club has done in the past, we wanted to create a more engaging event, and settled on Speed Networking as our activity, a play on speed dating where participants switch dates at various intervals throughout the night. This forces attendees to get out of their comfort zones and network with people they might otherwise be hesitant to approach.

To encourage attendance, this event was promoted heavily on our social media platforms and through email blasts. (Exhibit 11-13). We purposefully limited attendance this time to encourage meaningful conversation and ended in a total of 22 attendees at the event, many of which were new to our club or past members who hadn't attended an event in years. This resulted in memberships from attendees and attendance at later events. We felt we were able to engage a new group of prospective members with this event thanks to an exciting concept beyond basic networking.

We were also able to secure a sponsor for the event, Mill & Crate, who generously covered the bill for drinks and appetizers, and provided a raffle for attendees to win a bottle of champagne. (Exhibit 14). This financially helped the club, especially since towards the beginning of the year, when membership dollars are still rolling in, budgets can remain somewhat unpredictable.

For the speed networking portion of the event, we sat attendees across from each other at a long table and had one side of the table rotate down the length of the table at regular intervals. Drink and snack breaks were provided as well as sample questions for attendees to use to get to know each other if conversation didn't flow freely. Attendees appeared to enjoy themselves and despite our somewhat unconventional activity, our venue was also thrilled to have us there. (Exhibit 15-17).

Through feedback received by a post-event survey, as well as comments in response to our social posts, we found that attendees liked the convenience of an after-hours gathering. They also appreciated a networking opportunity where they were able to engage with peers without a formal agenda. (Exhibit 18-19). Our favorite comments from the survey include:

“It was exciting to meet and talk with people I hadn't had the opportunity to meet. The speed networking set up forced me to be more social than I otherwise would've been.”

“I loved, especially as a new member attending my first event, being placed into an environment where I got to meet many people. I also loved learning that not every member has a focused career in advertising; it was affirming to me.”

Program 3 - Lunch and Learn Series with Simone Jackson of Spotify

The Lunch and Learn series is a regularly occurring piece of AAF Midlands' educational programming, and an opportunity to expose our local membership to regional and national speakers in their own backyards. As mentioned, a goal of this series was to feature a variety of topics for our members throughout the year, and ensure we are offering something for everyone, no matter what professional role or career step they find themselves in.

We invited Simone Jackson, Global Brand Manager at Spotify to join us in December for our Lunch and Learn. Her talk centered on Brand Connection, and deepening relationships with core audiences through data and two-way creation. This proved to be perfect timing, as December is when Spotify releases their “Spotify Wrapped” customer engagement metrics, a very popular summary of

listening habits that is unique to each user. Simone spoke on using data such as this to create more engaging campaigns for customers, as well as an exploration of Spotify's other product initiatives.

We promoted the event over email and through our social channels (Exhibit 20). This presented some challenges, as in the same time period we were also promoting the Jingle Mingle event, as well as our call for entries to the American Advertising Awards. Despite having multiple promotions going on at the same time, this Lunch and Learn series was our most attended of the year so far, with 41 attendees joining us. (Exhibit 21). Simone was an engaging speaker and responses on our post event survey were overwhelmingly positive. (Exhibit 22).

3. Describe at least one special event. Please explain how you achieved your programming goals by describing the event details, target audience, method of promotion, average attendance, feedback mechanism, and results.

Special Event - Jingle Mingle Networking Event

Being located in the capital city, AAF Midlands has the opportunity to pair with several other professional groups that share a similar audience and mission. In the past, we have co-hosted events with groups such as the local chapter of the American Marketing Association (AMA), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), but it had been several years since we could coordinate such an event all together. The presidents of these clubs got together and decided to host Jingle Mingle, a holiday themed collaboration networking event in December for all members and prospective members of these clubs.

Our goal was to showcase the power of teamwork and collaboration and create a fun and engaging experience for our members, as well as cross promote events and engagement opportunities to a new audience through each other's memberships. We chose a local co-working space to host the event, Femme X Columbia, and we were able to negotiate a deal to avoid venue fees. Though they normally charge \$1,850 for an event of our size, they agreed to waive all of the venue rental fee if we opened the event up to their membership as well. This was an excellent opportunity for the venue to showcase their

co-working space as well and a huge cost savings for all four clubs. Because several clubs had extremely tight budgets, we agreed to a \$5 ticket price for members of any club, or \$15 for non-members. We provided light catering and a drink ticket with each ticket. This ensured members got the value of their ticket price, as the lowest priced drink at the bar was \$8, but still helped us offset our costs and ensured we had an accurate headcount heading into the event.

We each promoted the event through our respective websites, social media channels, and email listservs, targeting professionals in the advertising and marketing industries. (Exhibit 23).

We sold 66 tickets in advance of the event, with 41 of those tickets going to existing members and 25 sold to non-members. We also had walk ups the day of the event, for a total attendance of 70.

Combining our clubs into one event ensured that we didn't have to compete with each other for attendees during an incredibly busy December, and it allowed all clubs to cross promote their engagement activities to new members. This was especially successful for AAF, who provided a calendar of our immediate upcoming events to everyone who checked in (Exhibit 24) and even had event attendees reference the calendar and event specifically as their reason for attending (Exhibit 25).

Because of our sponsorship with the venue, and the overall ticket sales, the cost of this event to each club was just \$108, which was significantly below the budget each club agreed to of \$250. We also received excellent feedback from each of the clubs on how successful the event was for them, and attendees had a great time networking with each of the different groups. (Exhibit 26).

Recap and Looking Ahead

As we look back on the 2022-23 year for the AAF Midlands chapter, we can confidently say that it was a successful year. We achieved two major goals: providing diversity in program offering and increasing year-round engagement opportunities with Life After Work events and in-person luncheons.

We hosted several successful events, including the AAF Membership Kickoff Event, Jingle Mingle and several successful Lunch and Learns. Each event attracted professionals from the advertising and marketing industries, provided engaging and fun experiences, and helped us achieve our goals.

Looking ahead to the 2023-24 year, we are excited to continue building upon the successes of the previous year. Our goals for the upcoming year include expanding our community outreach and increasing member engagement. To achieve these goals, we plan to host more events that focus on professional development, community service, and networking opportunities.

We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and look forward to continuing to support and empower professionals in the advertising and marketing industries. As we look forward to the next year, we remain committed to these program goals, providing diverse experiences and fostering deeper connections among our members. We are excited to build on the past year's success and create an even stronger, more engaged community in the year ahead.

EXHIBIT 1



Heather Singleton
Programs Chair

Strategic Public Relations
Consulting



Dan Wyar
Programs Chair

Rhodes Branding

EXHIBIT 2



NETWORKING BINGO

HAS SIGNED UP FOR 2022-2023 MEMBERSHIP _____	IS A CREATIVE _____	HAS BEEN ON A PODCAST _____	IS LEFT HANDED _____	READ 10 OR MORE BOOKS THIS YEAR _____
WAS AN AAF MEMBER IN A PREVIOUS YEAR _____	OWNS A MOTORCYCLE _____	HAS MET A FAMOUS PERSON _____	WAS BORN IN SOUTH CAROLINA _____	HAS A BIRTHDAY THIS MONTH _____
MAKES TIKTOKS _____	HAS ATTENDED THE AMERICAN ADVERTISING AWARDS GALA _____	FREE SPACE	LIKES OYSTERS _____	IS THE YOUNGEST CHILD _____
LOVES CHRISTMAS MUSIC ALL YEAR ROUND _____	LOVES HEARING A SCARY STORY _____	LIKES GOING TO BASEBALL GAMES _____	LIKES TO GET UP EARLY EVERY DAY _____	WORKS FROM HOME _____
WENT TO COLLEGE OUTSIDE OF SC _____	HAS DONE VOLUNTEER WORK THIS YEAR _____	PLAYED A SPORT IN HIGH SCHOOL _____	HAS SWAM IN THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC OCEANS _____	HAS AN ANDROID PHONE _____

EXHIBIT 3



EXHIBIT 4



Kick off the year with AAF!

Our annual Membership Kickoff Event is NEXT WEEK! Be sure to join us at Savage Craft Ale Works in West Columbia on Tuesday, August 23rd from 6:00-9:00 PM. If you haven't already, reserve your spot by clicking the button below to join us for light bites, drinks, and networking bingo (did we mention there'll be prizes?)



Reserve Your Spot

EXHIBIT 5

From: [Danielle Salley](#)
To: [Whitney McCormac](#)
Subject: FW: Join me for tomorrow's kickoff event
Date: Monday, August 22, 2022 4:32:02 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

CAUTION: This email is from outside of your organization

Way to make me sadder I can't go by sending a PERSONALIZE INVITATION lol.



Danielle Salley
ASSOCIATE INTERACTIVE DIRECTOR 1411 GERVAIS STREET, FIFTH FLOOR
COLUMBIA, SC 29201
C 803 403 4513

[@ChernoffNewman](#)

Danielle.Salley@ChernoffNewman.com

chair, aaf council of governors



From: Whitney [AAF Midlands President] <info@aaamidlands.com>
Date: Monday, August 22, 2022 at 4:26 PM
To: Danielle Salley <danielle.salley@chernoffnewman.com>
Subject: Join me for tomorrow's kickoff event

Hey Danielle –

I want to personally invite you out for [tomorrow's annual Membership Kickoff event](#) at **Savage Craft Ale Works** in West Columbia from 6:00-9:00 PM.

If you haven't already, [reserve your spot here](#) to join us for light bites, drinks, and a great time with great people to kick off the new AAF Midlands membership year.

I look forward to seeing you tomorrow evening!

Whitney McCormac
President, AAF Midlands
whitneymccormac@gmail.com

EXHIBITS 6 & 7



EXHIBIT 8



EXHIBIT 9



Past Presidents of the AAF Midlands Board came out to show their support for our new year. Pictured: Jeff Lawler (2020-2021), Scott Harris (2015-2016), David Campbell (2012-2013), Lenza Jolley (2018-2019), Whitney McCormac (Current), Sam Bond (2021-2022) and Skot Garrick (2016-2017)


EXHIBIT 10



EXHIBIT 11



EXHIBIT 12



aaf american advertising federation of the midlands

LIFE AFTER WORK


WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH | 6-9PM | PUBLICO AT BULL ST.

SPONSORED BY: **M&C** | **MILL & CRATE**

On Your Mark, Get Set, NETWORK!

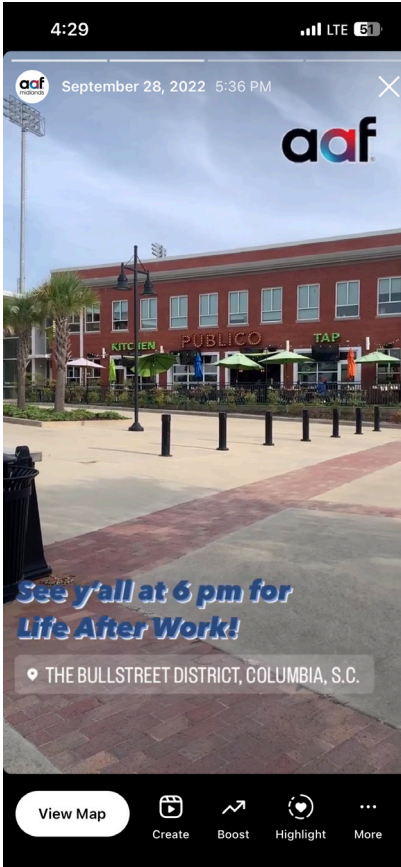
Interested in networking but need a little extra push to meet new people? Join us on **Wednesday, September 28th** at 6:00pm for **Life After Work: Speed Networking!** We'll arrange the tables and kickoff the conversation, and our sponsor **Mill & Crate** will take care of the refreshments. All you need to do is pack your business cards!

This event is free to attend, but registration is highly recommended. Click the button below to let us know you're coming!



[Reserve Your Spot](#)

EXHIBIT 13



4:29 LTE 51

aaf midlands September 28, 2022 5:36 PM

aaf

See y'all at 6 pm for Life After Work!

THE BULLSTREET DISTRICT, COLUMBIA, S.C.

[View Map](#) Create Boost Highlight More

EXHIBIT 14



4:29 LTE 51

aaf midlands September 28, 2022 6:02 PM

ONE LUCKY WINNER IS GOING HOME TONIGHT WITH A BOTTLE OF VEVE CLICQUOT

M&C

Enter to Win!

Drop Your Business Card or Fill Out A Slip and Enter to Win A Bottle of Veuve Clicquot Champagne.

Drawing will be held tonight during AAF's Life After Work Event.

aaf midlands

THANKS TO OUR SPONSOR

EXHIBIT 15



See insights and ads

Boost post

Like

Comment

Share

EXHIBIT 16



EXHIBIT 17



EXHIBIT 18

SatisfactionOfEvent_OverallHowWouldYouRateThisLifeAfterWorkEvent
Very Good
Very Good
Very Good

E
WhatDidYouLikeAboutTheEvent
It was exciting to meet and talk with people I hadn't had the opportunity to meet. The speed networking set up forced me to be more social than I otherwise would've been.
Great participation, very organized
I loved, especially as a new member attending my first event, being placed into an environment where I got to meet many people. I also loved learning that not every member has a focused career in advertising; it was affirming to me.

EXHIBIT 19



See insights and ads

Boost post

Like Comment Share

You and 6 others

Most relevant



Sarah Waldrop

This was an awesome event, and I am looking forward to the next one!

21m Like Reply Message Hide



Write a reply...



EXHIBIT 20

aafmidlands



Like Comment Share

Liked by eva_lasvegas and 5 others

aafmidlands Join us a week from today for lunch @uwmidlands to hear from Simone Jackson, Global Brand Manager at @spotify! You don't want to miss this dive into Spotify's product initiatives that serve to deepen relationships with core audiences through data, audio stories, and two-way creation. Save your spot using the link in our bio!

#Spotify #ColumbiaSC #ColaSC #LunchAndLearn #TwoWayCreation

EXHIBIT 21





EXHIBIT 24



EXHIBIT 25

Overall, how would you rate this professional development luncheon?

Very Good

How did you hear about the luncheon?

Through the Jingle Mingle flyer.

What did you like about the luncheon?

Content delivered by speaker.

EXHIBIT 26



aafmidlands
femme X COLUMBIA



 Liked by daniellesalley.creative and 23 others

aafmidlands Thank you to everyone that joined us on Thursday for Jingle Mingle! We had a spectacular evening networking and being festive with the communications professionals of the Midlands! 🎄