To: Dr. Elizabeth Monske
From: Don Bickley
Date: December 5, 2007
Subject: Document Specifications

Identification of the Document:

Ishpeming Main Street Program Volunteer Handbook

Originally Dated: October 8, 2007

Table of Contents and Overview:

* Note: Bolded sections are my responsibility

Overview:

The Ishpeming Main Street Volunteer Handbook will provide written instructions for committee members as well as the volunteers that work under them. It is meant to be three things: a history of the organization, a learning tool for volunteers and potential volunteers to learn about what the goals of the organization are, and a resource for volunteers to utilize in order to accomplish the organization's goals.

Audience definition:

Our audience consists of two groups of volunteers. For committee members, we will be working with people who have professional experience in a variety of areas. Some will have secondary education whereas others might only have a high school education but were able to create their own business because of their ingenuity. In either case, these Main Street Program members are united through real-world experience. These members will be active in other professional organizations outside their place of work and the Main Street Program. These committee members will be adults between the ages of twenty-five and sixty. They will most likely have busy schedules that are hard to coordinate with other committee members; they will live in the area but might not work locally; they will have the most experience in regard to how things within the Main Street Program are accomplished. As such, it may be difficult to convince them that they will need to read over the volunteer handbook, especially if we create a new policy in writing that is counter to what their own policy that is based on how things have been done traditionally.

Volunteers who will work under the committee members will live around the locale of Ishpeming, Michigan, a working-class city. Volunteer ages will range from a starting fourteen to seventy-five. A high-school-level comprehension is expected of all volunteers. Historically, younger volunteers have been less reliable and available whereas older volunteers, particularly the retired, are more reliable and available, but not necessarily the most usable (health concerns, aged bones, etc). Volunteer education will range from a high school diploma or GED to a college degree. These volunteers are not united by common real-world experience, and a method that accurately matches volunteer interests and experiences with Main Street Program goals must be created. These volunteers will not have the same economic investment in the downtown as committee members who own downtown businesses, but should be able to understand why their service is important not only to the community, but to themselves. In order to feel engaged, due to the lack of monetary investment in their service, these volunteers require a sense of dignity and respect, as well as confirmation that what they are doing is important.

Relationship to other Documents:

The volunteer handbook will be a combination of preexisting and new material. The preexisting data includes the mission statement, history of the organization, and the program director's roles with each committee. This data will be presented in the first of two sections that presents the volunteer with a history of the Main Street Program. We will be find, take, and edit for greater relevance a liability and privacy statement. These two statements will be located after the volunteer rights and responsibilities (a section we must create from scratch), but before the volunteer application form. Section II, Information for Volunteers, will contain the bulk of newly-crafted policy and procedures. Section I will be composed mostly of preexisting material, aside from subsection C, the latter of which will be summarized based on interviews Amber and I will conduct with each committee's Chair.

Writer's requirements:

Amber and I must coordinate meetings been Dan Mitchell, the Ishpeming Main Street Program Director, and the four committees. I will meet with members of the Promotion and Organization committees. Through interview, I will find out what they perceive their role and responsibilities within the program to be, and compare my findings with what they are officially supposed to be. Aside from trying to find a suitable use for graphics in the handbook, we must make sure that we present the data in our handbook in a way that is inviting, useful, and easy to scan. We will be dealing with a variety of people, which will cause the final document to contain a mix of specific and ambiguous writing. Aside from the bolded sections on a previous page, I will be responsible for designing the layout of the document and to ensure that every page is consistent with our global design philosophy. I will be expected to learn the necessary formatting techniques to create a professional-looking document.

Constraints:

Our biggest constraint will regard the scheduling of meetings between the Program Director and the Committee Chairs versus our own time commitments. We also run into the possibility that, due the complex nature of the Main Street Programs organization, we will have to juggle between which rules should apply to whom. Creating a sensible, polished document may prove difficult if we have a twenty page limit for a program that may best be described in fifty or more. Writing new policies and procedures that will be against the assumptions of committee members and their volunteers will no doubt be difficult to employ, and good communication will be essential in making sure that the new policy is not only understood, but respected.

Production information:

The volunteer handbook will be around 15 pages. We will combine sans/serif fonts with underlined, blue headings. Beneath these, a smaller, lighter blue heading will designate sections that comprise each subsection. We will utilize at least two graphics besides one for our cover page, though which sections those will end up being in are unknown. A table of contents will allow for easy access to the information on each page and we will connect the end of each page's title with the page number that will be on the edge of the page via a dotted line. This visual aid will help prevent the reader scanning a heading and then drifting down to the wrong page number indented to the right. We will further isolate chunks of data via tables (either with the cell outlines visible or only marked by a solid shade of color) to make the document easy to scan. The final handbook will be burned to CD-R along with a .doc and .docx version.

Schedules and Milestones:

October 2, 2007- Met with Dan Mitchell and discussed primary expectations, such as document requirements, for the volunteer handbook. Also started outlining the document specifications memo.

October 9, 2007- Met with Dan Mitchell to review the outline of the handbook. Also met with Jesse Bell, a chairman of one of the committees to discuss his role on the committee.

October 16, 2007 – Met with two members of the Promotions Committee (Josefa Andriacci, David Aeh) and the chair of the Design Committee (Phil Niemi).

October 23, 2007 – Approved new strategy for the table of contents.

October 30, 2007- Rough draft of manuals due to Dr. Monske.

November 6, 2007- Final draft of manuals due to Dr. Monske.

November 8, 2007- Usability tests due to Dr. Monske. Coordinated usability test date for the following week with Dan and presented him with our questionnaire and tweaked volunteer handbook.

November 13, 2007 – Conducted first usability test with Jesse Bell. Initiated test with Josefa and David, both on promotions committee.

November 14, 2007 – Conducted usability test with Josefa.

November 15, 2007 – Failed to conduct last test; forced to drop participant.

November 20, 2007- Usability write-ups and revisions due to Dr. Monske.

November 29, 2007 – Presented Dan Mitchell with a final draft hard copy (and CD-R) of the approved Main Street Program Volunteer Handbook.

Conclusion

The Main Street Program Volunteer Handbook will require numerous attempts to coordinate meetings between individuals within the organization. The table of contents, though a strong way to begin assembling the handbook, will most likely be changed as we learn more about the program and ways to best structure it. The finished product will have to be as dynamic as the volunteers who will be using it.