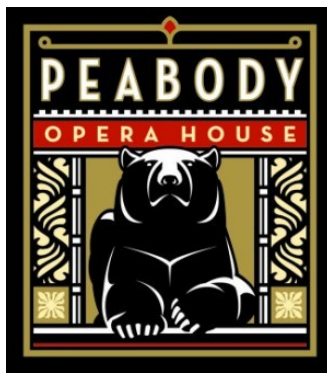


The Peabody Opera House:

Public Relations Plan



1400 Market Street
St. Louis, Mo
63103

www.peabodyoperahouse.com

Contact: Julie Turek

I. Define the problem

A. Background

The Peabody Opera House building has contributed to the rich history and architecture of the St. Louis area for more than 80 years. The building was first erected as the Cornerstone Municipal Auditorium — Convention Center and Opera House in 1932. In 1943, the Municipal Auditorium was renamed the Kiel Auditorium, after Mayor Henry W. Kiel. For the next 48 years, the Kiel Auditorium and adjoined Kiel Opera House were used to host events, musical artists and bands. Performers at the opera house ranged from Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones, Frank Sinatra, David Bowie and Cheap Trick. In December 1990, a plan was approved to tear down the convention hall portion of the Kiel Auditorium. The building was then renamed the Kiel Center and reopened on October 8, 1994. The center was used to host the St. Louis Blues and various other events in St. Louis. In 2006, naming rights were sold to the discount brokerage, Scottrade. Now, the Kiel Center is called the Scottrade Center.

The building connected to the Scottrade Center, the Kiel Opera House, was left unused following the close of the Kiel Auditorium in 1990. For the next 20 years, multiple parties attempted at reopening the abandoned establishment. But in June 2010, the financing was completed for a reopening. The time for a reopening was marked for fall 2011. The building was also renamed the Peabody Opera House after Peabody Energy bought naming rights. On the weekend of September 30 – October 1 2011, the Peabody Opera House will make its grand opening to the public.

Following its reopening, the Peabody Opera House will be used to host different performers, family shows, theatre plays and comedians. The building has 3,500 seats and is located on 1400 Market Street. It extends about 250 feet to connect to the Scottrade Center.

B. Problem

There is something significant about the opening of the Peabody Opera House, given its history with the City of St. Louis. Various people of older generations remember the building when it was opened as the Municipal Auditorium in 1932. For generations now, the venue has been used to host shows, events and headliners. This means people easily connected themselves to the building, and were prone to visiting frequently when it was open.

However, for more than 20 years, the building has been left stagnant in a city so rich with culture and activities. People who once regularly attended events at the Kiel Opera House found other establishments to watch their favorite performers and acts. The main issue the Peabody faces is awareness among the people of St. Louis. Their main goal should be to reestablish their new name among the city, appealing to a wide variety of target

audiences. Through regular events and awareness campaigns, it is a feasible statement to suggest that the Peabody can become the top venue for performances again.

The Peabody will need to connect with the community by creating awareness among the citizens of St. Louis, the media and various other stakeholders.

Also, the establishment will need to earn back its credibility, as a way to appeal to artists/performers that may want to have shows at the Peabody. There is no way to gain revenue if there aren't well-known acts and performers putting on shows regularly. If there aren't popular artists, there certainly won't be ticket sales from the community or coverage from media sources.

C. Stakeholders/audiences

1. Community audiences

The St. Louis community will be the main stakeholder to make or break the success of the Peabody's business. They are the ones to buy tickets, attend events and spread the good word about the establishment. The community constitutes families, teenagers and any person that enjoys the shows Peabody has to offer. If there is a theater play, depending on the content, the ticket sales will favor more toward families. If there is a popular band/artist performing at the venue, the younger generation will be more prone to attending the event. The Peabody's audiences in the community vary depending on its performers/shows.

In order to make the establishment family-friendly, there will need to be events that cater to the various audiences surrounding the community.

Also, if an event is successful, people are likely to tell friends, and are more likely to return to the Peabody. The reach of the Peabody name could also extend to those not native to St. Louis or are tourists. If they have a positive experience with the establishment, they may give their knowledge of the Peabody to another person in their own community.

2. Internal audiences

The internal audiences of the Peabody are the ones who work there day in and out. They are the office workers and even the ones running concession stands.

In order to boost internal communications, the Peabody will need to make various attempts at communicating regularly with employees about upcoming events and other need-to-know issues. The main goal of appealing to internal audiences is to make them happy to work for the Peabody. This will decrease turnover rate, which also looks good in the public eye because they feel the business is thriving and organized.

Internal audiences are essential to much of the success of a business. They set the tone for workdays and, with cooperation, make the establishment a more enjoyable place to work.

3. Media audiences

The media can either save or sink a business. They hold the power to wreck the name, or honor the establishment for all its history. For these reasons, it is essential that the Peabody takes careful consideration into the media outlets it chooses to appeal to. The job of the public relations and event tactics is to influence the media to cover each event, and get the name reestablished among the community.

With new social media networks and the fast-paced workflow of stories, it is imperative the Peabody works to hold events that are newsworthy and unique. Relationships should be established with the local news sources around St. Louis, to ensure coverage of an event.

4. Business stakeholders

The general business happenings and personnel within the Peabody are important to take into consideration. People that invest their money into the venue should be secure in the fact that their investment is being used wisely. Given the Peabody is newly reopening, securing business stakeholders' inhibitions is more important than ever.

This should be achieved through the production and visibility of annual reports. In the reports, there should be an account for each transaction and monetary spending. In being transparent with business stakeholders, a connection of credibility occurs, which may then attract more stakeholders.

D. Key messages

1. The Peabody Opera House is new and improved.

The building that is now the Peabody Opera House has been around the community for more than 80 years. In this amount of time, the venue has hosted various performers and other well-known artists. The Peabody has established itself as a go-to place in regards to major performances. However, since its closing, the Peabody has lost its clientele to other venues around the city.

The message that the Peabody is new and improved will bring patrons, who used to attend events regularly, back and buying tickets. The message will also appeal to the artists that might have heard of the establishment before it became the Peabody. They may get word that it is reopening, and given its rich history, will book more shows. Artists and performers will be even more apt to booking shows once they hear of the new building designs.

Also, the new and improved status of the building will appeal to younger generations. Many members of today's younger crowd are drawn to the vintage/historical vibe of a venue. And if the right artists are booked, that may seal the attendance of the younger generation even further.

2. The Peabody Opera House is family-friendly.

This message is most-importantly appealing to parents who enjoy taking their children to various theater performances the Peabody may hold. In society, if an establishment is appealing to families, then it generally is appealing to the rest of the community. If the Peabody can start off on the right foot with parents, that can then lead to a larger amount of gained credibility.

Parents will be more likely to allow their children to attend events alone, as they get old enough. That will also lead into the venue's preference among generations to come, as the building continues to maintain a firm, family-friendly reputation.

3. The Peabody Opera House is the best place to hold an event/ book a performance in the St. Louis area.

Since there is much competition around the St. Louis area in regards to places to hold shows, the Peabody needs to appeal to artists in an appropriate and effective way. The kind of artists the venue will attract are those who are not extremely well known in terms of pop culture, but are big enough to generate a crowd of around 3,500 people (the max capacity).

The fact that the Peabody isn't the largest place to hold concerts may be appealing to artists who enjoy a more intimate setting for their performances. In regards to theatre performances, the Peabody is also ideal. It has a classic disposition like the Fox Theater, and similar capacity. The Peabody is also appealing to symphonies and other local events because of its history with hosting such performances.

E. Define success

Success can be defined in multiple ways when evaluating a grand opening or overall public relations communications. But for the Peabody, success most-importantly means creating awareness among its various target audiences. The objective of the grand opening will be to attract new and returning customers to the Peabody after a long-awaited reopening. Success also means positioning the venue in the minds of those who are young, or have never heard of the establishment.

Also, in order to maintain its valued image, the Peabody has to continue its visibility within the community through events that appeal to the various stakeholders. The

establishment should also work to create a presence on various social networking platforms (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram).

II. Strategies

A. Generate awareness

Using various key messages, public relations should work to make the public aware of the Peabody Opera House's reopening. This will be achieved through a grand opening event weekend held on from Friday, September 30 to Saturday, October 1. The event will work as the kick-starter for the venue by forming an initial, and vital, relationship with the community and other stakeholders. This relationship should then last throughout the course of the Peabody Opera House's existence. The relationships should also be passed down through posterity, as the venue maintains its position as a historical place to visit.

Also, for the people who are unaware of the Peabody's existence or its rich history, the grand opening event will work as an introduction. It is imperative the grand opening sparks the interest of possible target audiences, and makes them want to come back for more events/performances in the future.

Business stakeholders and potential performers are also a main appeal in the grand opening event. Their attention and desire to perform and invest in the Peabody is an essential part in generating revenue for the establishment.

B. Community relations

Aside from the grand opening event, Peabody public relations should strive to continue to seek the interest of community audiences. The community should view the Peabody as a household name because of its events and visibility throughout the City of St. Louis. Families should want to take their children to the venue. Proper steps need to be taken in order to make this objective a reality. There will be various tactics used to position the Peabody in the mind of the community.

Also, because the Peabody is historical, it needs to use its historical appeal to generate an audience of people that may just be traveling to St. Louis on vacation. St. Louis is known for its history. And appealing to travelers could help with extending the Peabody name to various other cities and communities.

C. Media relations

With the various new forms of social networking and online news, the relationship between public relations practitioners and new sources has evolved. In order for an event and establishment to gain coverage among media outlets, there needs to be unique elements that gain attention.

In regards to getting media coverage, the Peabody Opera House should strive to generate events that will attract coverage and publicity.

There should also be a way to communicate to the public in a large way. The proper tactics should be used to spark the interest of mass audiences. Social media is also an imperative part of communicating to various publics, and starting conversations about the Peabody opening and other events hosted by the establishment.

III. Tactics

A. Generate awareness

1. In order for the Peabody Opera House to make a wave in terms of informing people about its reopening, it's imperative that a large-scale event occur. The grand reopening should span over the weekend to appeal to the various target audiences. The first night of the grand opening will be Friday, September 30. The community at large will be encouraged to attend the activities that will take place at the Peabody on that night.

Some of the various activities offered at the Friday night opening will include a free concert by a local band or pop artist, different booths of games in the lobby of the opera house, and prizes and giveaways. The booths in the lobby of the Peabody will allow attendees to participate in carnival-like games, where they can win different kinds of prizes. Some of the prizes will include iPods, free tickets to shows and other merchandise from participating sponsors. Also in the lobby, there will be stations set up where attendees can play on various gaming systems (Wii, Xbox, etc.). They can face opponents if they choose, and win various prizes for participating. The booths will attract younger generations and parents. The booths will be open from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm, closing right before the concert.

Later in the night, a famous pop artist or band will perform in the theater. The concert will be free admission. Before, during and after the concert, there will be giveaways and prizes given to the audience via a random raffle. The audience members will be entered into the raffle if they provided their email and name at a booth in the lobby. The various raffle winners will be given their prizes on stage by famous comedian, Jim Gaffigan. The concert will attract the teenagers and young adults of St. Louis.

2. The second day of the grand opening weekend will be Saturday, October 1. This event will be an invitation-only dinner for stakeholders, sponsors, investors and possibly some potential performers. The dinner will be set up in the lobby of the Peabody and catered by a local five-star restaurant. After the dinner, a popular solo artist will entertain investors. At the end of the event, each person will be given a gift bag filled with products from sponsors. The event will appeal to the businessmen, investors and performers by showing them that the Peabody appreciates their support. It will also position the Peabody as a trustworthy and notable organization.

3. In order for the first night to be a success, proper steps must be taken to ensure the public is informed of the event. Social media proves to be an ideal platform for this kind of promotion. The public will get daily updates and reminders about the various activities that will occur during the Friday event via the Peabody's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Since the Saturday, October 1 event will be invitation-only, it will not receive promotion through social media.

The separate Twitter and Facebook accounts should post questions that spark conversation about the Peabody. This will help the audience remember the event and all it entails.

4. Another media platform that needs to be used to promote the grand opening is a press release. The release should state all the activities that will happen during the Friday, September 30 and Saturday, October 1 events. It should also point out newsworthy elements about the event, like the artist performing and free giveaways. The release will also stress that the building is historic, new, improved and ready for reopen. It will be sent to local newspapers, like the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and local news channels that may wish to cover the event.

B. Community relations

1. In order to maintain an ongoing relationship with the community after the grand opening, the Peabody should make multiple attempts at promoting itself on a constant basis. This ongoing interaction should occur by hosting student night events. Students with a 3.0 GPA or higher will receive a voucher through their school. At the student night event once a month, they will present the voucher to the ticket office. This will give them a coupon for \$5 off concession stand purchases. They will also receive free admittance to the show happening on student night.

2. Another way an organization can remain a public figure throughout a community is through sponsoring a local charity. In the Peabody Opera House's situation, it should consider sponsoring well-known charities like the American Red Cross; Caring for Kids, Inc.; HavenHouse St. Louis, etc. By sponsoring these charities, the St. Louis community will see the Peabody as an essential and contributing part of society. At least once a month, there should be a night dedicated to one local charity, where people are encouraged to donate money. Also, the Peabody should sponsor local events that occur frequently in the community.

3. The Peabody grand opening marks the beginning of the Halloween season. This should be used as a chance for the organization to host a costume party or Halloween-themed event. On Halloween night, there will be a scary-movie marathon showing in the main theater, given there isn't a major performance booked for that night. Attendees will be encouraged to dress up for the occasion and enter in the costume contest. The winner will receive a yearlong free access to all Peabody Opera House shows and performances. If it so happens the Peabody is hosting a major performance on Halloween, the event will adjust its date.

C. Media relations

1. Not only should social media be a part of the grand opening event, but an ongoing campaign. Social media accounts need to update their pages and statuses regularly, keeping

followers and “likers” in the know about upcoming performances and events. Also, the Peabody should start a blog site where they are able to maintain a personal relationship with various audiences.

2. Another effective way to inform audiences about upcoming performances is through direct mail and email. Direct mail flyers/brochures should be sent out to the St. Louis area. With it, the mail piece will offer a free Peabody Opera House magnetic calendar of events. The mail piece will give the receiver the option to send back the direct mail piece with a donation amount. If the receiver chooses to donate, they will become a Peabody Opera House premium member. Through the membership, they will receive emails with discounted pricing on tickets. They will also have access to better seat options when attending events.

3. The Peabody should seek different advertising mediums in order to position itself as the go-to place to attend a show/performance. The advertisements will be found in local magazines, on bus shelters, on banners around the St. Louis area and online. The ads will stress the history of the Peabody, and look sharp and eye-catching. St. Louis Magazine, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Riverfront Times, etc. are all ideal publications where the Peabody should be advertised. Banner advertising should be positioned along highways 55 and 44. Banner ads online on various websites affiliated with St. Louis will also serve as an effective medium for advertising. Advertising may also appeal to potential artists who may be interested in performing at the Peabody.

IV. Evaluation

In order to properly determine the success of the Peabody Opera House's grand opening and its other public relations endeavors, it is imperative to use methods of evaluation. The evaluation process allows the Peabody to determine its next steps in terms of strategy and key messages. If the message sent to audiences needs to be changed, the root of the problem must be found quickly.

In the following methods of evaluation, you will find recommendations that will prompt audiences to want to provide feedback concerning their experience with the Peabody. The methods are easily accessible, and can be interpreted comprehensively.

Evaluations also aid in the relationships between the Peabody and stakeholders. Those investing in the establishment need to see growth in sales, and whether customer satisfaction is being met.

A. Methods

1. Friday night grand opening survey

Recommendations:

The amount of attendees at Friday night's grand opening event will be determined through a survey given to attendees while they are leaving the event. If the survey is completed and turned in, the attendee will be submitted to a raffle to possibly win a free ticket to an upcoming show/performance. This incentive will influence most attendees to submit to a survey and help determine the amount of people that came to the grand opening.

2. Saturday night grand opening RSVPs

Recommendations:

The Saturday night grand opening event is invitation only. It will be easy to determine the effectiveness of the event because RSVPs will be sent to determine head count.

3. Online survey after each performance/show

Recommendations:

After each performance/show that occurs at the Peabody, the attendees will be handed a flyer that lists upcoming shows and prompts them to complete an online survey. If the attendee completes the survey that questions their experience with the Peabody, they will automatically receive a discount on their next ticket purchase.

4. Counting ticket sales

Recommendations:

Fortunately for the Peabody, each performance/show that occurs is a way to measure their success in generating sales. If ticket sales for a specific performance/show are low, the Peabody is able to determine failure rather quickly and change its strategy and key messages accordingly.