

# VHA Marketing & Communications Strategy

## **STATUS of INITIATIVES / RECOMMENDATIONS** Date 10/12/22

**BLUE - CPLT** Completed or **DEL** Deleted

**RED - ACTV** Active - Currently being worked on

**GREEN - PLAN** or **NEW** - in Plan but no activity. New initiatives identified in 2022

### OBJECTIVE /GOAL:

- Establish the VHA prominence as the most widely publicly recognized Champion of Residents Advocacy in The Villages.
- Establish overall cohesive strategy and processes to promote programs, determine most appropriate public relations and advertising in the various targeted media outlets and resident platforms.
- Create VHA Strategic Director position (unpaid or paid) to develop and oversee the VHA Marketing and Communications Strategy. If no one readily identifiable, look into a consulting engagement with Marketing/Communications specialist.

### BACKGROUND / CURRENT STATE from 2021

- The VHA has discrete marketing and communication products that are in use today. Some are very effective, others not as much. However, there is no overarching strategy to tie these together with measurable objectives. Nor is there an individual identified to lead this strategy.
- The VHA Brand image and what it stands for is not immediately recognizable by the average resident.
- The main printed VHA product - The VHA Voice monthly newspaper is an excellent, well-written, informative publication, however with the growing population it is becoming very costly to produce. Also, many people don't know when it is in The Daily Sun or can't find it.
- The VHA has undertaken a major project to totally redesign its website and back office business system. Website was launched in 2021.
- New Residents Night is a very effective event; however, we need to sign up more members.
- We are collecting more email addresses of members and beginning to make better use of VHA email blasts to members as well as internal communications to VHA team personnel.

### SCOPE - GENERAL RECOMMENDATION DESCRIPTIONS (October 28, 2021 BoD)

- Create VHA Strategic Director position (unpaid or paid) to develop and oversee the VHA Marketing and Communications Strategy. **DEL Decision not to pursue.** If no one is readily identifiable, look into a consulting engagement with Marketing/Communications specialist. **ACTV high priority - VHA Exec VP, Peter Russell and small committee negotiating with Tangent media and Daily Sun as consultants instead of hiring Director to look at key needs of this strategy**
- Create a Permanent Marketing and Communications Program and Team beginning with a needs assessment followed by specific objectives, alignment of existing tools, development of new ones, implementation and measurement of success and effectiveness. The scope also includes internal communications. **ACTV High priority- See above comment**
- Update Key informational documents about the VHA:
  - History of VHA document needs to be updated from 2015 to present. **ACTV - Sandy Mott working on this but need to determine estimated completion date.**
  - Fast Facts Reference Guide (FFRG) including promotional "Elevator speech" needs to be updated. **ACTV - Currently updating FFRG for review and make available to Officers; ACTV - elevator speech being reworked. Feedback being send to Joan Sullivan with Peter Moeller co-ordinating.**

- Tri-fold needs to represent current state of VHA. **CPLT** updated version completed, Very effective document to use to communicate. **PLAN** - suggestion to review periodically i.e. every 6 months
- VHA Programs Descriptions Summary **CPLT**
- Create rolling Roadshow presentation or video. **CPLT** - powerpoint slides are available; **ACTV**- Use of them, needs to be put in place for all programs.
- VHA Individuals need to be identified and provided accurate information to promote the VHA in various settings. **ACTV** – Increased VP training to recruit NRs and provide promotional material for NRs to distribute in neighborhoods and at programs.
- We need business card handouts for our VHA leaders that have important contact information on the back and place for name, numbers, websites, etc. to give out to potential members. **ACTV** – Currently have for Executive Board, Option made available for Neighborhood Reps to get business cards.
- Some ideas to enable promotion:
  - VHA needs to have a sufficient number of photographers and reporters, perhaps one per area, who function in as many areas as possible for reporting our activities. **PLAN** – Currently Mark Palmer is only photographer, need additional photographers and need reporters! An idea for NRs responsibilities
  - VHA should continue to participate in parades and promotional events where we can put out tables of literature, etc., whenever possible, anything to get our brand noticed. A large foam core board with our logo on it placed in a prominent place at eye level at all events would help people recognize our brand. **NEW** – Pres/EVP/VPs – designate who attends business openings for photo on website/Voice
  - VHA should “honk our horn” as often as possible. Promote where and when we have given scholarships, money, any stories of us doing good things must be reported. **ACTV** - **Foundation Committee** goal for donation photos; Had articles in Daily Sun several times this year
  - VHA needs to start capturing all news worthy events, workshops, any contact. Find out where they heard about us, using reporters and metrics. **ACTV** - Area VPs need to develop approach for each of their areas.
  - Add “Benefits Fair” to Newcomer’s night with booth for VHA Programs / Committees to generate interest and recruit members / volunteers **CPLT** -Extra table set up with Officers promoting VHA

## **WORKSHOP (Nov 17, 2021) and INDIVIDUAL (2022) RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **VHA NEW RESIDENT NIGHT**  
The first impression residents have of The VHA is New Resident Night. As such, more should and can make it a good impression by revamping the evening and making it more interesting and relevant.
  - Reconsider and revamp who the presenters are and make sure we are not duplicating other programs offered by The Villages - **CPLT** VHA President is satisfied with the current slate of presenters
  - Have more VHA representation and visibility there and hone the presentation we give so it is polished and consistent **CPLT** Whoever is our main greeting speaker needs to be dynamic, and perhaps done on a rotating basis. More leadership seated at the front would be nice, too. Thank guests for coming
  - Reintroduce 50/50 and refreshments. **DEL** Decision made not to do
  - Use the half hour prior to the program to meet and greet and mingle with residents as they arrive. **CPLT**
  - Make sure we know and communicate well WHO WE ARE and what we do for the community. **ACTV** - How we meet and greet New Residents is vital. A welcoming face and hospitality, would be good to do. It is key that we do not assume the people in the room know who we are. We have to be very specific about our hosting, benefits, and goals. Merchant to Members program should also be highlighted at New Resident Night, perhaps using a merchant to promote the program.

- Focus on recruitment that night **ACTV**
  - Get email addresses for guests and ask permission to receive text messages so we can communicate and follow-up with attendees. **DEL** Decision to not have a sign-in sheet for guests attending NRN therefore will not collect email addresses. Note if a person becomes a VHA Member, we will get their email address.
  - Have a great info packet that is concise and not overly technical/wordy. **ACTV?**
  - Make sure presenters stick around after the program to answer questions and don't leave too soon. **CPLT**
  - **NEW** Need some type of way to track whom we invite to new resident night with who shows up. Some folks might just not be available that night but still might want the info and also might join VHA. We need a process to follow up with invitee no shows. **DEL** Not feasible - we do not take attendance at NRN.
- THE VHA VOICE: **ACTV & ongoing**
    - Expand the list of those who contribute articles and use them on a rotating basis for variety.
    - Include personal stories of those who have benefitted from our programs, e.g. Helping Hands, supporting Honor Flight, etc.
    - Feature a monthly spotlight on M2M participating businesses (Barbara Gudgel to handle) **CPLT** - Although program coordinator Barbara Gudgel had be out of town for awhile, she is back and will resume doing. They are good to include.
    - Blast a pdf copy of the VHA Voice to members each month. **CPLT**
    - Evaluate where we place extra copies of The Voice and consider new locations to increase visibility (Jan Palmer to analyze) **CPLT**
    - **CPLT** Accomplishments, Recommendations and **ACTV ongoing**
      - Personal stories are being used when it is appropriate; however, space for our own news and partner columns makes it harder to do unless it ties in directly.
      - Improvements made: Changed the look, recruited new contributors, established a rotating schedule for those contributors based on their specific needs to promote certain events, received permission to use Ronnie Clark's photos to enhance our banner, added "Golf Cart Safety Tip of the Month", refresh ads regularly, and write most of the front page and follow-up articles related to current events.
      - There is a renewed sense of the importance of the articles submitted and that they are done on time and are relevant.
    - **NEW** - Leveraging Printed VHA Voice, Daily Sun and WebSite to increase readership as well as manage expenses.
- THE DAILY SUN **CPLT** and **ACTV ongoing**
    - **CPLT** Let The Daily Sun know when we want coverage for events. (VHA President responsible for doing this.
    - **CPLT** - Overall interaction with The Daily Sun is the responsibility of the VHA President / Publisher
    - **CPLT** - VHA Voice Editor interacts with Daily Sun regarding content of articles for The VHA Voice.
- VHA WEBSITE and BACK OFFICE
    - **CPLT** - Website needs to be user-friendly with info plain language
    - **CPLT** - Increased use of Email Blasts - very effective for Advertising Events & Activities, Communicating with VHA Leadership and members
    - **CPLT** - Backing up documents that exists in Document Repository
    - **ACTV** - What will motivate members to use the website?
    - **ACTV** - Find ways to target new residents
    - **ACTV** - Have links to helpful resources, informational services, activities
    - **ACTV** - Completion of Back Office Functionality including Document Repository

- **NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVES:** Additional Individually Submitted Recommendations:
  - Neighborhood Representatives needed to promote the VHA while also providing knowledge of District government through: Handouts about CDDs obtained from Customer Service, encouraging CDD Orientation and Resident Academy. Too many residents are not aware that they govern their CDD. This added responsibility may give Neighborhood Representatives more purpose showing the VHA as supportive and informative to residents. **ACTV – These responsibilities part of VP training of Reps** **PLAN - Add “Facebook VHA Updates” to duties for neighborhood reps for their individual village Facebook pages**

- **GENERAL**

- Have a recruitment table at all events. **CPLT** Guests are given a form to fill out as they enter for membership, including having the option to use their credit card that evening (for most events).
- Circle of Partners: Make sure our partners are promoting The VHA in return for our support and promoting them
  - **CPLT and ACTV (ongoing)** - We need to identify and have a specific list of who our partners are and work with them to promote them and then they will naturally promote The VHA. If they have publications, perhaps establish a quid pro quo approach to request a mention and then provide it.
- **Proactive Personal Marketing - PLAN** - Consider other proactive regular approaches to welcome new residents and introduce them to new resident night. For example, while driving through a VHA Leader’s Village, he stopped and introduced himself to people unloading a PODS container assuming they were new residents. They are long term renters who are considering buying 6 months from now. He doubts they’d ever hear about VHA or attend events if he hadn’t drove by and saw them unloading their shipping container. In addition to using new homeowners’ info to just send invite to new resident night, how can we use other info (such as long-term renters info if available) to market to new members?
- Internal Communications
  - **CPLT** - Increased use of Email Blasts - very effective for Advertising Events & Activities
  - **ACTV** - More options for tailored Email communications for example VPs to specific District or All Members, VPs to Reps, Reps to Members/Residents
  - **ACTV** - Need more Training of “Back Office” system for those who need it.
  - **ACTV** - Need to continually improve internal communications and make better use of features we have to facilitate that. Keeping our own people informed is critical for the smooth operation of the VHA.