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**TO: ANN BARNETTE**

**FROM: LAUREN CONNOR AND LEXI TRIMPE**

**DATE: JANUARY 8, 2020**

**SUBJECT: FRANCO/MILFORD DDA - 2019 PR AND SOCIAL MEDIA RECAP**

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The following overview summarizes media coverage and digital results from January through December 2019 related to Franco's efforts to promote Downtown Milford on behalf of the Milford Downtown Development Authority.

**OVERVIEW:**

- In 2019, Franco established a direct communications source for the Milford Downtown Development Authority by implementing the Downtown Milford newsletter, which reaches both residents and visitors using an owned communications channel.
- Franco restructured its communications approach for Downtown Milford using the newsletter as a form of external communications to reach Downtown Milford's audiences directly, and used stories curated for the newsletter to conduct media outreach and share on social media.
- To streamline communications, Franco created an online submission form for Downtown Milford businesses to submit content for the newsletter and social media.
- Franco continued its quarterly photography sessions for media, social media, website and merchant use.
- Additionally, communications supported the Village of Milford's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary through social and traditional media, helping to celebrate and remind the public of the milestone.

**DIGITAL MEDIA EFFORTS:**

- Franco launched an owned channel of communication for the Milford Downtown Development Authority by creating the Downtown Milford newsletter.
- The first quarterly Downtown Milford newsletter launched in May 2019 after three months of subscriber targeting and planning which, quickly transitioned into a monthly newsletter starting in July.
- These newsletters included multiple Special Editions tied to specific events, including Currents Music Festival, Ladies Night Out and holiday programming.
- Prior to launch, Franco built and grew the email list from scratch, using integrated tactics including online signup at MeetMeInMilford.com, email signatures, outreach to merchants to include signing up in their own newsletters, signup form in the Village's office, distribution in the Village's email, etc.

- The list grew from **0 to 2,426 subscribers** in less than 9 months, averaging **205 subscribers per month**.
- In total, **9 newsletters**, including three Special Editions, were distributed in 2019 generating an average:
  - **49.4% Open Rate** (Industry Avg. 20.51% for Events & Entertainment)
  - **6.7% Click Rate** (Industry Avg. 2.36% for Events & Entertainment)

## **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

- Franco continued to monitor and manage downtown Milford's Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- From January to December 2019, the **Facebook audience grew by 1,017 fans**, a **113% increase in new followers** compared to the previous year. The Facebook page grew to **10,390 total fans** by the end of 2019, a **10.8% year-over-year growth**.
  - **Paid page likes** accounted for **34% or 431 likes** of new page likes in 2019.
  - The Facebook page generated **1,846,588 impressions** and **121,853 engagements** in 2019.
    - Top 2019 content by engagement included a memorial post for Blue Grill and two articles featuring Milford in their lists for top Christmas towns and best chocolate shops in Michigan.
- From January to December 2019, the **Instagram audience grew by 543 fans** for a total of **1,735 fans**.
  - The Instagram page generated **207,323 impressions (increased 80% from 2018)** and **9,100 engagements (increased 23% from 2018)**.
  - Top Instagram posts by engagement included scenic photos of Downtown Milford during the fall and holiday seasons.
- Franco leveraged paid advertising on Facebook throughout the year, starting with campaigns aimed at **generating newsletter signups**, which extended through December during peak engagement times.
  - These signup campaigns generated:
    - **363 Unique Subscribers**
    - **50,899 Impressions**
    - **17,071 Engagements** (497 reactions, 20 comments, 73 shares, 3,144 clicks)
- In November and December, Franco used Facebook advertising to increase event awareness surrounding Milford's holiday programming, as well as to increase the awareness and reach of the Downtown Milford page.
- Franco "boosted" fewer events on Facebook in 2019, focused on promoting the events for a longer time period to increase the overall reach of the promotions.
  - These event ads generated:
    - **687 Unique Event Responses**
    - **27,070 Impressions**
    - **10,132 Engagements** (442 reactions, 17 comments, 76 shares, 1,654 clicks)

- Shared at the height of the holiday season, Franco created holiday-themed videos to promote the Downtown Milford page on Facebook. These ads generated:
  - **435 Page Likes**
  - **14,816 Impressions**
  - **4,881 Engagement** (364 Reactions, 9 comments, 64 shares, 932 clicks)
- In addition to the above holiday advertising, Franco leveraged a new campaign in 2019, aimed at **encouraging users to head downtown and “Check In” on Facebook** for a chance to win a \$300 gift card to a merchant of their choice from Nov. 18 to Dec. 6.
- This campaign aimed to not only **encourage followers to physically go downtown**, but also sought to **increase awareness with new audiences** by appealing to the platform’s algorithm to reach more users organically.
  - These campaigns generated:
    - **62,161 Impressions**
    - **19,740 Engagements** (26 reactions, 357 clicks, 13,972 video plays)
    - **285 Check-Ins** during the campaign
      - **132% year-over-year increase**

#### TRADITIONAL MEDIA EFFORTS:

- Throughout 2019 media relations support was shifted from regular PR outreach tied to events and business stories to quarterly PR outreach tied to events in order to implement the monthly newsletter within the monthly budget. Story ideas and/or activities submitted by merchants for the newsletter were considered for additional PR support.
- Most media relations support was focused on community events with select outreach tied to business and community stories. Topics included:
  - Heart of Milford Poker Run, Ladies Night Out (spring and fall), Milford Bike Fest & Trail Challenge, Milford Farmers Market, Currents Music Festival, Milford’s Sidewalk Sales, Milford Memories Festival including Acorn Farm’s Polish Pottery Sale, Downtown Garage’s Wheels for Prosper, The Big Reveal, Christmas Open House, Give Back Friday, Dinner’s On Us and Visits with Santa.
- Franco **secured 194 media placements** from January through December 2019 including **138 online placements, 41 broadcast mentions** and **15 print placements**. New media outreach activities in 2019 compared to 2018 included:
  - Bike Fest & Trail Challenge
  - Wheels to Prosper – Downtown Garage
- Of the **41 broadcast mentions**, 5 were in-studio morning TV segments and 23 were radio broadcast mentions. Radio mentions increased from 2 mentions to 23 mentions in 2019, resulting in a **1,050% increase** from 2018. Media coverage for broadcast included Ladies Night Out (spring and fall), Milford Sidewalk Sales and Milford Memories.
- Milford received the most media coverage from *The Oakland Press*, FOX 2 Detroit, WWJ Detroit and *The Spinal Column* compared to other media outlets in the region. Other publications like WXYZ, the *Detroit News*, *Milford Times* and Oakland County Moms shared news about downtown Milford.

- May, August and November saw the highest number of media coverage compared to other months with a combined **118 placements**. Promoted events included the Milford Bike Fest & Trail Challenge, the Milford Farmers Market, Currents Music Festival, Milford Memories, Ladies Night Out and the season-end holiday events like Big Reveal and Christmas Open House.
- **70 media placements** were feature stories, while an additional **124 placements** were news briefs and mentions.

### **2020 Recommendations:**

- Continue shifting communications toward digital using the newsletter as a targeted form of outreach to residents and visitors.
- Create more owned content for Milford using the newsletter to create long form lifestyle stories that can be cross promoted through social media, media and the website to help tell the story of Milford.
- Target downtown business owners through Milford Merchants and email to continue enlisting them to submit content to the newsletter. Use these topics for media outreach consideration and social media support.
- Establish a **monthly social media advertising budget** and incorporate social media giveaways through social networks and the newsletter to extend reach, following and engagement from fans.
- Engage with Milford businesses regularly to participate in **social media giveaways** on downtown Milford's social pages especially during events like Ladies Night Out and Small Business Saturday.
- Incorporate more video into digital content to help continue showcasing Downtown Milford using at least one quarterly photography session to capture video.