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# Brief History

Healthy Aging Association (HAA![[1]](#footnote-1)) is a non-profit organisation launched on 14th June 2002. HAA! is formed by a pool of highly experienced doctors and business professionals who have gathered together to provide help voluntarily, in the form of medical advice and education, to its key publics, specifically Singaporeans aged 50 to 80 years old. They too collaborate with groups of non-medical individuals to strive towards understanding and satisfying the diverse needs of today's older generation.

HAA! is Singapore's first association that aims to spread awareness on the importance of practicing healthy aging. It aims to spread its message by holding activities and programmes for its key publics as well as other interested members of the public. HAA! aims to spread the importance of keeping a healthy lifestyle during the later stages of life as well as to encourage those in their mid-life to start shaping and get started for a new chapter in their lives. (Healthy Aging Association, 2014)

# Organisation Structure

The table below shows the organisation structure of Healthy Aging Association.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Patron:** | Dr Della Lee/ Dr Cheng Wei Chen |
| **Chairman:** | Dr Fong Poh Him |
| **Vice-Chairman:** | Ms Simone Yeo |
| **Secretary:** | Ms Liza Lim |
| **Treasurer:** | Dr Loo Han Waen |
|  |  |
| **Sub-Committee Chairpersons:** | |
| **Events/ Programs:** | Ms Liza Lim |
| **Medical Advisory:** | Dr Loo Han Woen |
| **Publicity:** | Mr Eric Teng |
|  |  |
| **Medical Advisory Committee:** | |
|  | Dr Tan Seang Beng  MBBS, MMED (SURG)  FRCS (EDIN & GLAS) |
|  | Dr Fong Poh Him  MBBS, FRCS (ED), MMED (SURG),  FAMS (PLASTIC SURGERY) |
|  | Dr Loo Han Woen  MBBS (SINGAPORE)  MRCS (ED)  MMED (SURGERY) |

# Mission/ Vision[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Mission:** To encourage the older population to partake in more challenging activities, to gain a new purpose in life and to live healthily and independently to reduce their reliance on their children, relatives and the State.   
**Vision:** To educate people about the importance of the maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle during the later part of their lives. (Healthy Aging Association, 2014)

# Organisation Goals

Singapore’s population is driving towards an aging population due to factors such as decreased birth rate and increase in longevity. Due to aging, the possibility of negative psychological and physical impacts increase. These changes are capable of impacting a person's sense of well-being negatively, as well as restrict and limit their contributions to their family and society. A large reservoir of Singapore’s population in the age group (55 to 80 years old) may become unproductive if the issue is not addressed and this could potentially result in a significant amount of burden put not only to themselves but to their families and society.

HAA! aims to spread the awareness to Singaporeans that it is possible for anyone of any age to keep their mind and body as young and active as they want it to be, given that they prepare for it. It is inevitable that hormonal changes, diseases and even marital friction accelerates with age and this could affect one's sense of well-being. HAA! hopes to eradicate people from thinking that they are unable to feel the younger and healthier former selves as they age.

HAA! hopes to encourage the older population to partake in more challenging and meaningful activities, giving them a new purpose in life and to live healthily and independently, thus reducing their reliance on their family and the State. (Healthy Aging Association, 2014)

# Key Publics

HAA! is the only association in Singapore which focuses on the golden age group and thus, its key public targets the golden age group in Singapore. The golden age group refers to people aged between 50s to their late 80s where most people are usually at the peak of their respective professions or careers. Many people in this group often find themselves suddenly without a meaningful existence after retiring or stopping work. HAA! aims to help this group of people by encouraging them that is possible to be revitalised and even start a second career even after retiring or stopping work. By putting them away from retirement, it would not only waste their talents that they have built over the years but also inevitably decrease the burden to their family and to the society. (Healthy Aging Association, 2014)

Volunteers and members are also a key public for HAA!. Interested and like-minded people can join HAA! to serve as volunteers or members. HAA! is supported by 11 board members and a network of volunteers and members working towards spreading awareness of healthy and active aging as well as raising funds. The volunteers are not limited to senior citizens or middle aged adults, but also include medical professionals, housewives and young adults. They are responsible for helping in areas such as administrative work and fundraising activities, and activities or programmes that HAA! organises. HAA! membership is open to members of the public including individuals suffering from aging and the consequences of aging. There are three categories of membership and they are Honorary Membership, Individual Membership and Spouse (Refer to Appendix B). As a NPO, HAA! relies on its membership subscriptions as well as donations from the public for its operation. It is stated explicitly whether HAA! receives support from companies or corporate sponsors and thus, it is not possible to infer that stakeholders are HAA!’s key publics.

# Organisation’s Website vs Competitors[[3]](#footnote-3)

The focus is to find out the strengths as well as weaknesses that HAA!’s website possesses compared with two other competitors’ websites. Following which, the elements from competitors’ websites that could be implemented onto HAA!’s website would be defined.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Healthy Aging Association[[4]](#footnote-4)** | **C3A Ageing Well[[5]](#footnote-5)** | **Women’s Initiative For Ageing Successfully (WINGS)[[6]](#footnote-6)** |
| Strengths | 1. Under the ‘Projects and Programmes’ tab, there are information on upcoming programmes or projects where users can participate in. The availability of such information freely on its website can help to reach out to as many members of the public as possible.  2. Under the ‘Quick Guide Resource & Services For Seniors’ tab, there is a downloadable pdf link where users can view a brochure containing useful information for the public. Such information is beneficial to the public as it can serve as educational purposes.  3. The navigation links are located at the right-hand side of the website, allowing users to navigate easily through the entire website. Information is also clearly categorised, such that readers can easily obtain the information relevant to them upon clicking on the respective navigation links.  4. HAA! website features monochromatic colours, where a single hue of green is used in varying tones. The overall cool, green theme gives the website an aesthetically pleasing and comfortable feel to the viewer. | 1. The website provides users with useful information such as ‘Recommended Books’ and ‘Useful Articles’. This makes the website an informative platform where user can visit to browse and learn new information. This serves to serves to spread the message that C3A would like to spread to its key publics, thus, making an impact in the readers.  2. There are buttons at the top right hand side of the website that allows users to change the text size of the website for their own preferences (e.g. to make the text size larger or smaller). There are also buttons that allows users to change the language settings (e.g. Chinese or English). These buttons serve to suit different users’ preferences and make the website easy to read. There is a global search bar for users to search anything in the entire website. This serves to help users to navigate easily and find relevant information quickly and easily.  3. The homepage features a ‘Highlights’ section that draws users to view what are the current and top highlights that C3A has. This allows users to find most current or top information easily and quickly without having to search through the whole website.  4. The website uses a white background with black text (a high contrasting color for background followed by a dark colored color for its texts). This allows users to read and browse through the information in the website easily and comfortably.  5. The website has a polychromatic color scheme as it utilises more than one color. It uses white for its main background, and colors such as blue, purple, red, grey to categorize different sections of the website. The different variety of colors evokes a feeling of liveliness to the website.  6. The navigation links are located at the top of the website and upon hovering over on the various links, it changes color from blue to red. This validates one of the design principles of feedback where the hovering effect serves to indicate and assure users where the pointer is pointing at. | 1. The website is filled with useful information and relevant articles that serves to spread the message that WINGS would like to spread to its key publics, thus, making an impact in the readers.  2. There are shortcut buttons (e.g. Events Calendar, Be a WINGS Women, Donate) located at the top and right side of the website for users to click on it easily and quickly to retrieve information that they are looking for.  3. Similar to C3A, the navigation links are located at the top of the website and upon hovering, the links will produce a pink hovering effect indicating what the user is pointing at.  4. The website uses 3 different colors (e.g. grey, white and pink). The color pink is strongly associated with femininity and thus, it is suitable for WINGS to use the color pink, which suits the website.  5. The website is filled with images and icons (representative of its respective texts) that helps to cut down on the number of text on the website a well as to grab the attention of the user. Having images helps to make the website appear less cluttered with words or messy too.  6. At the bottom of the website, it has a ‘Show/ Hide Sitemap’ toggle button that allows users to expand or hide the sitemap links. This helps to suit individual users’ preferences if they prefer the sitemap to be hidden or shown. |
| Weaknesses | 1. HAA! does not have their vision or mission stated explicitly in their website. It is stated in chunks of paragraphs under the ‘About Us’ tab instead. It is important that HAA! indicate their vision and mission statements to communicate the goals of its organisation to the public.  2. There are no images in the website at all. As compared to the other 2 competitor’s website, HAA!’s website is the plainest and least aesthetically pleasing. HAA! could incorporate several images or icons and lesser text paragraphs to grab as well as retain the user’s attention and also allow users to read its information easily and faster. More visual images and lesser texts could help to make the website more aesthetically pleasing.  3. HAA! does not have any other forms of social media (e.g. Facebook site, Instagram). In today’s technologically advanced society, it would be beneficial for HAA! to own accounts on several social media platforms. These social media platforms will be effective in reaching out to the public.  4. The activities or programmes organised by HAA! under the ‘Projects and Programmes’ tab are not sorted out accordingly to date and users do not have the freedom to filter the various programmes or activities stated in the website. Having a sorting or filtering function would allow users to search for programmes or activities more easily.  5. The website is not updated constantly. For example, the last ‘Press Clippings’ stated on their site is a press clipping from year 2002. This does not help in the trustworthiness of the website. In addition, the website has a ‘Links’ tab which is still under construction. The first impression of an unfinished website is that it causes frustration and annoyance and that is not what HAA! want their company to be associated with. In addition, the website does not provide sufficient useful information or relevant articles that serves to spread the message that it would like to spread to its key publics to make an impact to the readers.  6. The website has an enquiry form that can be sent directly online. On the other hand, the membership form can only be completed through sending its hardcopy via mail. The process could be sped up and made easier for users by making it to be available online.  7. HAA! website uses a monochromic color scheme (only a few shades of green). HAA! could perhaps use more shades of green or use another color in addition to green (e.g. adjacent color on the color wheel such as red). | 1. There are too many section boxes on the main page of the website and this makes the frontpage of the website appear to be messy. The multiple boxes on the homepage makes it hard to grab the attention of the users and thus, the users would not know which section to focus on and this affects the website’s readability.  2. C3A utilises a polychromatic color scheme and the variety of colors is too much. Although it creates a lively feeling to their website, it is distracting and it makes the website feel very messy and unorganised. | 1. The color of grey is a rather dull color. Perhaps WINGS could replace the grey color with a more lively color instead (e.g. red, orange, green, turquoise). |
| Elements that can be implemented | 1. HAA! could update their website more regularly as well as explicitly state their vision or mission under the ‘About Us’ tab. By stating these important information explicitly, it will better inform users on what HAA! is all about.  2. HAA! could include a few images in the website. In addition, to make HAA!’s website more aesthetically pleasing, adding a few more color variations (E.g. Using other shades of green or using adjacent colors such as red), adding hovering effects when the user mouse pointer is on buttons or links could be implemented. These implementations could grab as well as retain the user’s attention and also allow users to read its information easily and faster. More visual images and lesser texts could help to make the website more aesthetically pleasing.  3. HAA! could start having their presence on social media (e.g. Facebook site, Instagram) to reach out to more of its key publics.  4. The activities or programmes organised by HAA! under the ‘Projects and Programmes’ tab could be sorted out accordingly to date and a filtering option could be available for users to have the freedom to filter the various programmes or activities stated in the website. This could also help users to find activities or programmes easier and quicker.  5. HAA! could include buttons that allows users to change the text size of the website for their own preferences (e.g. to make the text size larger or smaller). Buttons that allows users to change the language settings (e.g. Chinese or English) could be made available as well. There could also be a global search bar for users to search anything in the entire website. HAA! could include shortcut buttons (e.g. Events Calendar, Be a Member, Donate) at the side of the website for the ease of users to click on it easily and quickly. Such features helps to improve on the usability as well as readibility of HAA!’s website.  6. HAA! homepage could include more features such as a ‘Highlights’ section that draws users to view what are the current and top highlights that HAA! has or a ‘Recommended Books’ or ‘Useful Articles’ sections to make HAA! website a more informative website where users can visit to obtain information and to make an impact to the readers. | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |

# Public Relations Problem/ Opportunity Identified

As HAA! consciously works towards its vision to educate people about the importance of having an active and healthy lifestyle during the golden age, a public relations opportunity identified is its communication to its key publics on whether HAA!’s messages are reaching out to as many people as possible.

Our population is ageing rapidly. It is estimated that in 2030, 1 in 4 Singaporeans will be 65 or older. This would mean that Singapore will have over 900,000 senior citizens, which is approximately double the current 440,000. The Ministerial Committee on Ageing engaged over 4,000 Singaporeans between June 2014 and May 2015 to hear about their hopes and ideas on how to help Singaporeans to age well. Among the 10 topics discussed, health and wellness was one of the topics that received concerns. (Ministry of Health, 2016) Thus, it is essential that the message that HAA! spreads to the public is reaching out to as many people as possible.

Another public relations opportunity identified would be that whether HAA!’s messages are effectively taken in by its key publics or not. Singaporeans are living longer but it does not conclude that Singaporeans are living healthier. As Singapore drives towards an aging population and our lifestyles become more sedentary, reports states that 2 in 5 Singaporeans suffer from at least one chronic illness such as diabetes or high blood pressure. (Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, 2014) It is therefore essential that HAA! present its messages in the most creative way as possible so as to make an impact in its key publics mindset.

HAA! could use social media to reach out as well as create an impact on its key publics. The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, started by the ALS Association, is one of the successful online campaigns that created an impact worldwide on the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Lou Gehrigs Disease[[7]](#footnote-7). People from all walks of life participated in the [ALS Ice Bucket challenge](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/11/ice-bucket-challenge-fundraising_n_5668602.html) and after several weeks of the viral campaign, the ALS Association raised over $114 million in donations. (The Huffington Post, 2015) Thus, it would be beneficial for HAA! to have a presence on various social media platforms.

# Strategic Plan

The public relations opportunities identified above can be addressed through these various strategies: revamping of HAA!’s website, the use of publications, as well as setting up social media platforms.

In revamping HAA!’s website, the following additional features that are stated in the ‘Organisation’s Website vs Competitors’ section above could be implemented into the new and updated website. Through revamping the website, it will not only be able to provide more useful information, but also allow users to find information quickly and easily as compared to the website at present.

The publications, in the form of brochures and fliers, will serve to spread HAA!’s messages to its key publics. The purpose of providing publications helps to make sure that HAA!’s messages reaches out not only through online but also through offline platforms. The publication is targeted to its key publics as well as other interested members of the public. It serves to raise awareness of the importance of healthy and active aging, the consequences and benefits as well as other useful information. The publications will be made easily accessible through its website.

Lastly, social media platforms (e.g. Facebook page, Instagram and Youtube platform) would be set up. The purpose of having a presence on social media platforms is to make use of the influential capability that social media can provide. Through social media, it can reach out to a wider range of audience as compared to other forms of media. These campaigns will be targeted to its key publics as well as other interested members of the public.

Through carrying out these strategic plans, it serves to improve the communication of HAA!’s messages to its key publics more effectively. Thus, making Singapore a better place for Singaporeans to grow old in, and be a model for successful ageing.

# References

Healthy Aging Association. (2014). *About Us Healthy Aging Association*. (Healthy Aging Association) Retrieved 10 February, 2017, from http://www.healthyaging.org.sg/aboutus.htm

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The Huffington Post. (1 April, 2015). *7 Reasons Why Nonprofits Need To Ramp Up Their Social Media Presence*. Retrieved from The Huffington Post: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/04/01/nonprofits-social-media-\_n\_6987304.html

# Appendix A

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Healthy Aging Association** | **C3A Ageing Well** | **Women’s Initiative For Ageing Successfully (WINGS)** |
| Strengths | 1.  2.  3.  4. | 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6. | 1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6. |

# Appendix B

**MEMBERSHIP QUALIFICATION AND RIGHTS**

There shall be three categories of membership. They are as follows:

**a. Honorary Membership**

The Committee may confer Honorary Membership to individual members of the public, who have significant contributions to the Society or to society in general. They shall not have the right to vote or the right to hold office in the Society.

**b. Individual Membership**

Individual Membership shall be open to individual members of the public, including health care professionals and patients suffering from signs and symptoms of aging. Individual members have the right to vote and the right to hold office in the Society.

**c. Spouse Membership**

Spouses of members are entitled to all privileges and rights of membership upon payment of the annual subscription of $40 or at such rate as may be fixed by the Committee EXCEPT that they are not entitled to attend or vote at any General Meeting of the Society or to hold any elected office in the Society. These rights and privileges shall cease immediately upon the principal member ceasing to be a member of the Society for any reason whatsoever.

(Healthy Aging Association, 2014)

1. The acronym ‘HAA!’ is both an assertive expression of the vitality of life and a defiant shout against the ravages of time. We cannot help getting old, but we can all continue to live meaningful lives if we can maintain our health and well-being. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Healthy Aging Association does not have its vision, mission, values nor philosophy stated explicitly in their website. The vision and goals stated are based on my interpretation and understanding from the information provided in the ‘About Us’ section of their website. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Refer to Appendix A for the screenshots of HAA! as well as the various competitors’ websites [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.healthyaging.org.sg/ [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. http://www.c3a.org.sg/Home\_process.do [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://wings.sg/ [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease and Motor Neurone Disease (MND), is a specific disease that causes the death of neurons which control voluntary muscles. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)