Amachi Pittsburgh

Executive Summary

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Background

Amachi Pittsburgh is a nonprofit organization focused on empowering youth within the local community. They use a three-pronged approach which includes 1 on 1 mentoring, youth leadership, and family reunification. Amachi Pittsburgh focuses their program on breaking the school-to-prison pipeline by connecting with youth who have incarcerated parents. Amachi Pittsburgh was founded in 2003, and their office is located near Uptown Pittsburgh. Amachi uses their ties to the local community to meet new mentors and mentees. Amachi Pittsburgh has already helped 8500 children with incarcerated parents. Additionally, Amachi has been credited with a 92% success rate with their youth breaking the incarceration cycle.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

Amachi's primary promotional methods include connections at local churches, tabling at prisons, and word of mouth to promote their programs. With the onset of COVID-19, many of these old practices became unfeasible. Due to this, online promotion becomes a more important practice in mentor and mentee recruitment. Amachi does not currently have the resources to learn and spend the time to improve their online presence, however, recruiting new participants for their programs is critical in Amachi's goals. Recruiting new participants is especially critical in their mentoring program, as the more potential mentees and mentors they have in their program, the more likely they are to create strong, compatible matches between mentee and mentor. They must improve this online presence to adapt to the COVID-19 climate and recruit new participants.

Project Vision

We plan on using a two-pronged approach of improving their online presence. First, inspired by the ideas of tabling outside the prisons, we hope to use the search engine optimization (SEO) method to achieve similar effects. SEO means getting free traffic from search engines from website improvement. This method could hopefully let Amachi Pittsburgh pop up at the top of the search result when people searched for prison-related information. Second, we plan on improving the user-experience of the Amachi site. There are multiple improvements and additional pages that can improve the Amachi site that would benefit first-time or returning

visitors. This method can hopefully increase the chance these first-time visitors join Amachi and that they retain their current participants.

Project Outcomes

The project conducted search engine optimization (SEO) on Amachi Pittsburgh's current website, which increased website traffic. Additionally, the project created and published three new website pages (Frequently Asked Questions, Career, Calendar). The project also improved the organization's organization process: the project helped Amachi Pittsburgh identify the need of technology maintenance and the guidelines for future website user testing. Additionally, the project created several training materials, including SEO and WordPress training documentation.

Project Deliverables

The project deliverables include SEO implementation, documentation and training materials on SEO, documentation on user testing protocols and findings, and multiple additional web pages added to their current site. The additional pages added to their webpage include a FAQ page, Careers page, and a Calendar Events page.

Recommendations

Amachi Pittsburgh needs to identify specified staff who will upkeep their technology deployment, which includes website maintenance and update. This staff member will need to train to be well-versed on SEO and Wordpress. They will be the primary contact within the organization to update these aspects of their webpage, and they can help other staff members work through SEO and Wordpress as well. Additionally, all members of the organization are suggested to read through the training material to familiarize with website maintenance methods. The organization will need to update SEO (meta title and descriptions) with every new page added to the website. Continual SEO updates for new and revamped pages is critical in maintaining a strong online presence for Amachi

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Student Consulting Team

Doug Heymann was the project manager and facilitated the client relationship. He is a fourth-year student majoring in Information Systems. Upon graduation, he will be working at Deloitte as a technology consultant.

Philip Wellener led the website development. He is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Business Administration. He is looking toward a career in product and project management.

Zeke Rong led the SEO implementation effort. He is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with an additional major in Statistics and Machine Learning. He will be interning at Autodesk this summer and is looking towards a career in product management.