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Proposal for Implementation Plan for UBC Communication and Marketing Strategy (UBC 2.0)

Preface. During the past summer I've been orientating myself to UBC's organization, *Communication and Marketing Strategy (UBC 2.0)* and have been consulting some key individuals in the UBC organization, including UBC's Strategy Coordinator **Mikko Lohikoski**, Secretary General **Paweł Żaboklicki** and the members of secretariat, concerning organization's communication.

This document is composed based on the UBC 2.0 document and aforementioned personal work. This document proposes actions to be taken to effectively start implementing the UBC 2.0 strategy. The goal of this document is as stated in the UBC 2.0 strategy:

*"It is recommended that an implementation plan is elaborated that sets out implementation activities"*¹

Proposed Implementational Activities

Presented in descending order of priority.

Hiring a communication officer. UBC 2.0 puts a heavy emphasis on the editorial aspects of organization's communications and marketing. Also, further strategic, long-term development and planning of communications calls for added resources not currently available in the organization.

To effectively reshape UBC's communications, an extra man-year should be allocated for a position of chief communications officer (CCO). This individual should be responsible for editorial oversight and practical implementation of UBC's communications. Also, the same person should be responsible for formulation of UBC's core messages and future systematic development of UBC's marketing, brand building, lobbying and internal communications.

Proposed action(s): Budget an additional man-year for hiring a chief communication officer (CCO) for the organization. The person hired should have solid experience in organizational communications and marketing, understanding of digital media technology and the capability to

¹ UBC 2.0, p. 3

process news and present editorial productions in different media. CCO should also be fluent in English. As the communications of the UBC could be decentralized (as proposed in UBC 2.0), CCO could operate from any of the member cities.

Distributed content creation. One of the key aspects of UBC 2.0 strategy is to effectively engage entire organization in its communications and marketing. In addition to hiring a communications officer, the editorial capacity of UBC should be expanded by utilizing distributed content creation, this being in-line with UBC 2.0 document:

“The communication team needs a network of writers and ”reporters”, representing the Commissions.”²

Proposed action(s): Identify and select nodes from member commissions and cities. Engage these individuals in planning and implementing UBC’s communication. This should be started with current website and available tools. CCO should oversee coordination and training of the select individuals as well as formulate editorial guidelines and focus areas for the organization.

Technical platform and site design of UBC.net. At the moment UBC’s digital communication is tied to the IT infrastructure of City of Gdansk. While this is a cost-efficient way for maintaining a relatively static website, it hinders further development, as UBC website is competing for resources with City of Gdansk’s own technical requirements.

It is also likely that future editorial and communications changes should affect the site’s information architecture, feature set, design and “look and feel” which will put too much pressure on the current infrastructure and development process (coordinated to City of Gdansk via the secretariat)

Proposed action(s) Future CCO should assess the suitability of current CMS (Content Management System) and site design from the perspective of overall UBC communications and decide whether to deploy a new system / design, decoupling UBC from Gdansk infrastructure, or continue the development of current website.

All technical development should proceed with clear, descriptive up-front design requirement documentation and transparent, effective project planning. If the website is decoupled from Gdansk IT, development and design costs (approximately 10.000–15.000 euro) of a new system should be included in a budget. Also, the future CCO should be able to communicate directly with the technical provider of UBC’s website platform.

Electronic newsletter. UBC Secretariat is currently developing an electronic newsletter in cooperation with City of Gdansk, utilizing its newsletter implementation and design. This is in-line with UBC 2.0, that proposes complementing the Bulletin with a digital newsletter, featuring three to five topical, edited stories and news pieces and published monthly.

² UBC 2.0, p. 7

Proposed action(s): Newsletter design specifications should be spelled out before proceeding with any technical implementation. Newsletter should be under editorial guidance of CCO. Deployment of organization-wide contact/e-mail database, if required, could be incorporated into the system.

Printed publications. Printed publications, namely UBC Bulletin and Event Calendar consume a substantial part of the secretariat's resources while accruing non-trivial financial costs and producing questionable returns in information transfer, marketing and brand building. UBC 2.0 suggests that these publications be moved exclusively online:

"It is recommended that most of UBC's printed publications - such as the Bulletin, Events Calendar and Reports from the General Conference - are published in a digital format rather than printed in the future"³

Proposed action(s): UBC Bulletin should be brought under CCO's editorial oversight, after which its future, format and target audiences both online and offline should be evaluated. Suitability of the current CMS (Content Management System) for digital publishing of UBC's printed publications should also be evaluated and incorporated into future technical design specifications.

Citizens aren't a key target audience of the UBC. The publication of citizen-facing publications such as event calendar should either be dropped altogether or published online with lowest priority. Possible paper copies should mainly target their contents to experts and key political persons rather than to general public.

Social media. UBC 2.0 suggests the wide use of social media as a way to increase the interactivity of UBC communication. However, social media channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube should be considered as complementary channels rather than ends in themselves. In addition their use should be planned as a part of bigger communications overhaul.

Proposed action(s): Maintain light presence in social media to familiarize the secretariat and other key individuals with the associated tools. More extensive use of social media should be considered in the future as part of move from one-way communications into dialogue based communications.

³ UBC 2.0, p. 10