

Running head: ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED:
JEWISH NONPROFIT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES THAT BUILD BRIDGES

By
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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Jewish Nonprofit Management in cooperation with the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California

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HEBREW UNION COLLEGE – JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
LOS ANGELES SCHOOL

ZELIKOW SCHOOL OF JEWISH NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

I'm not interested.

I don't believe in G-d.

My mom's not Jewish, so I don't know if I am.

I had a bar mitzvah but didn't really connect to anything after that.

There are many reasons people give not to engage with their Judaism. Each results in Jews disengaging from Jewish nonprofit organizations, and organizations are often at a loss for how to reconnect with these Jews.

As dual-masters students in Jewish Nonprofit Management and Communication Management, we wanted to address this nonprofit disengagement issue through the lens of communication. We explored what communication and marketing methods currently work for nonprofits that are engaging disengaged Jews.

We interviewed 17 staff and 5 participants from 13 nonprofit organizations we determined are actively engaging disengaged Jewish populations. We asked staff about their organization's missions and structure, how their organizations measure engagement, and the marketing practices they utilize. We asked the participants about their past engagement history, how they became involved with their particular Jewish nonprofit, and the success of the marketing strategy the nonprofit implemented. Finally, we conducted content analysis on the websites and social media of the 17 organizations interviewed, plus three additional organizations also excelling in engaging disengaged Jews.

Our findings highlighted the importance of identifying target audiences. The organizational staff we interviewed had a keen understanding of their audiences and created messaging for their websites, social media platforms, and print and email marketing with them in

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

mind. The staff determined where their audience congregated (in person and online) and actively sought them out in those spaces.

We also observed an ongoing need for organizations to embrace relational Judaism. Organizations utilize “radical welcoming” to make outsiders feel more comfortable and connected to an organization from the first entry point. The organizational staff took radical welcoming a step further by inviting prospective and new participants to join them for one-on-one meetings.

If Jewish organizations are seeking new ways to reach out and communicate with disengaged Jews, our findings and recommendations will be a useful tool.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	8
Julia Hubner’s Acknowledgements	8
Amy Mendelsohn’s Acknowledgements	9
Introduction	11
Literature Review	13
So, How Do We Define Engagement, Anyway?	13
Engagement Trends in Judaism	17
Recent Engagement Trends	20
Marketing Practices for Engagement	21
Definitions	30
Methods	31
Interview Procedure	31
Interview Details	33
Content Analysis Procedure	34
Content Analysis Details	34
Results	36
Organizational Understanding of Engagement	36
Communication Strategies That Build Bridges	39
Niche organizations	39
Targeted messaging	45
Web design	49
Word-of-mouth	56

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Print marketing	59
Email marketing	61
Social media	64
External marketing	74
Analytics	76
Meeting them where they are	80
Relational Judaism	84
Newcomer follow-up	89
Recommendations	91
Niche Organizations	91
Targeted Messaging	92
Web Design	93
Word-of-Mouth	95
Print Marketing	95
Email Marketing	96
Social Media	97
External Marketing	98
Analytics	98
Meeting Them Where They Are	99
Relational Judaism	100
Newcomer Follow-Up	100
Conclusion	101
References	103

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Appendices 113

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

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Finally, to all those Jewish organizations supported by visionary teams that think

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

differently, innovate constantly, and welcome radically, you inspire us all and serve as an example of what should be.

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ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

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Introduction

“I’m not much for prayers, or miracles, or organized religion.”

- *Tal Benisty (How I Found The Kitchen, Yom Kippur, 2016)*

Tal Benisty spoke these words during his 2016 Yom Kippur sermon at The Kitchen, an emergent congregation in San Francisco, CA. Founding Rabbi Noa Kushner asked him to share his story with the community. His is a powerful example of what can happen if a Jew who has been disconnected from organizational Judaism truly connects with a Jewish nonprofit.

Benisty has been involved with The Kitchen for almost two years, but before that he hadn’t been to temple in over a decade. He grew up in Belgium in a Conservative Jewish household and attended Orthodox synagogues for High Holy Days and other religious services. As a child and adolescent Benisty led a very active Jewish life both at school and through various Jewish cultural organizations. By the time he was 20, though, Benisty disconnected from organized Jewish life. He still considered himself a Jew, but as his travels took him across Europe, he didn’t settle into a particular Jewish community. Rather than seeking out Jewish experiences, Benisty discovered his own personalized Judaism. “My relationship with Judaism became both very intellectual and very individual,” he told us (November 4, 2016).

On his travels, Benisty met his wife, a Christian woman from America. Together, they moved to the U.S. to start their life together. In preparing for their future, the couple delved into conversation about the type of family and home they wanted to create. Although his Judaism had become an individual experience, Benisty knew he wanted to raise Jewish children. His wife agreed, and they started a lengthy process of researching and learning more about what Jewish options were available to them. Benisty’s wife wanted to start the conversion process, and they decided to seek out a community where they would both feel comfortable. Benisty

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

acknowledged that he was reluctant to join a synagogue. He told us, “I didn’t see any need to add all these social dynamics around me when my religion had been so personal this whole time” (November 4, 2016). Despite that, the couple went synagogue-shopping, but nothing was the right fit for this couple. They’d almost given up, when Benisty stumbled upon The Kitchen.

Benisty didn’t even realize The Kitchen was a congregation when he attended the first event – he thought he was attending a picnic dinner. Instead, when the Shabbat service began, he was surprised to have found, purely by accident, a community that fit his and his wife’s sensibilities. The service was atypical. The music was inspiring. The challah was delicious.

After years of detachment from Jewish organizations, Benisty became an engaged participant at The Kitchen. He feels the organization has a gravitational force, pulling him back week after week. He called Shabbat at The Kitchen “a buffer zone this sort of transitional ritual at the end of the week” (November 4, 2016) that has kept him engaged since that first picnic.

Benisty’s story of disengagement from Jewish organizations – before finding The Kitchen – is one that resonates with many American Jews today (Case, 2014; Ukeles, Miller, & Cohen, 2012; Cohen, 2012). As dual masters students studying Communication Management and Jewish Nonprofit Management, we sought to research how Jewish nonprofits implement communication strategies that help build bridges for disengaged Jews. We sought to research the different communication methods that Jewish nonprofits effectively harness to engage the disengaged and guide individuals like Tal to reconnect with Jewish nonprofit organizations or even to connect for the first time.

Additionally, we examined why and how disengaged Jews engage or re-engage with their Judaism. Ultimately, our research led us to showcase how organizations’ effective use of

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

communication and marketing techniques – specifically targeted messaging, web design, word-of-mouth, print marketing, email marketing, social media, external marketing and others – allow them to reach out to disengaged populations.

This research allowed us to apply what we learned in our HUC and USC course work, and address a topic that we hope will provide answers for Jewish professionals like ourselves. As a result, this thesis expands on how communication is not only at the center of Jewish nonprofit organizations, but the best tool to leverage engagement. We hope that our research adds to the field with valuable findings that will interest Jewish organizational staff, as well as best practices that can be implemented in the future.

Literature Review

So, How Do We Define Engagement, Anyway?

In the literature

Some articles have likened the trend in Jews' disaffiliation from synagogues with a trend in general disengagement from organized Jewish life (Cooperman, Smith, & Cornibert, 2015). However, Jews who are unaffiliated – who do not pay membership dues to a congregation – may still be highly engaged with their personal Jewish life (Cohen, 2012). Engaged Jews believe “being Jewish is very important to them,” (Cohen, 2012, p. 5) whereas Jews who are disengaged do not find Judaism to be an important part of their lives. Within this group, younger Jews were observed to be indifferent towards their Judaism, while older, more settled Jews were observed to have a “modicum of interest” (Horowitz, 2003).

Five different Jewish engagement trends have been identified over the course of a person's lifetime (Horowitz, 2005). The first trend is for a person with little or no connection with their Judaism to continue this trend throughout life. On the other side of the spectrum, a

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

person can be highly connected with their Judaism and continue on that trajectory. One trend is for someone's connection to fade over time, while another person could increase in engagement. Lastly, there is an observed trend for Jewish commitment to shift internally, while external Jewish engagement can remain low or decrease (Horowitz, 2005). Our definition of engagement takes these five trends and also noted that these trends shift based on age, life-stage, location, and other factors (Horowitz, 2005).

Jewish engagement has shifted over the years. Scholars have observed that Jews under the age of 40 emphasize purpose as a major factor of their Jewish engagement (Cohen, 2010). What some may consider more traditional Jewish practice has adapted for these younger Jews, who engage with new styles of prayer communities, cultural mediums, textual and service experiences, and more (Cohen, 2010). These younger, engaged Jews are more likely to join independent *minyanim* or "rabbi-led emergent communities" (p. 8), experience a broad range of Jewish cultural options from art to music to YouTube videos, appreciate a revival of Jewish educational offerings, and use new media available online (Cohen, 2010).

At an even younger age, Jewish kids can become engaged in Judaism through experiences with Jewish art, music, service learning, and food (Edwards, 2013). However, it is unclear what, if any, are the long-term impacts of these entry points (Edwards, 2013).

The definition of engagement has evolved with new research on the millennial generation (Shapira & Cousens, 2016). Traditionally, engagement occurred when Jews donated to "traditional Jewish charities" (p. 4), affiliated with synagogues, or served on the committees of traditional Jewish organizations (Shapira & Cousens, 2016). While millennials are expressing their Judaism less traditionally, they are still connecting in deep and personal ways (Shapira & Cousens, 2016). That engagement can happen at various moments in a millennial's life – on a

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Birthright trip, for example – but true engagement must happen at more frequent occurrences in order for young Jews to connect with Judaism in the long-term (Shapira & Cousens, 2016). True engagement means Jewish millennials care about their Jewishness, create a personal Jewish community, care for and support other Jews within that community, and continue these trends long-term (Shapira & Cousens, 2016).

Our definition of engagement with Jewish organizations

There are various ways to define engagement, whether by how connected Jews are to Jewish ritual, people, or activities, whether they affiliate with a sect or congregation, whether they donate to Jewish causes, and more. Our concern is primarily how people specifically engage with Jewish organizations. Using the literature on engagement, as well as those definitions provided by our respondents, we structured a framework of how participants engage with Jewish nonprofits. We determined that engagement should be seen as a spectrum, rather than a yes-or-no determination. Individuals move along the “spectrum of engagement” for various reasons, including life phase, age, commitment to a particular organization, connection with new organizations, value shifts, etc. We also chose to incorporate various marketing strategies along the spectrum to identify where they come into play as someone moves along the spectrum.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

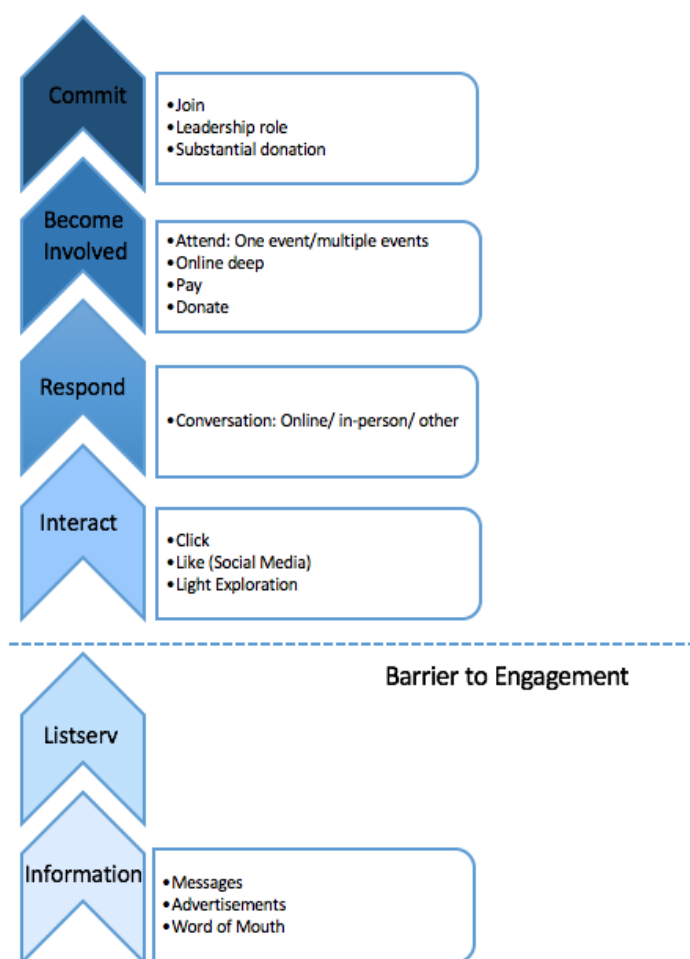


Figure 1. The authors' engagement continuum.

Figure 1 offers a visual interpretation of our “Spectrum of Engagement” with Jewish nonprofits. It is important to note the “Barrier to Engagement” that we believe separates a person who is simply receiving information from an organization and a participant who is truly engaging. Left of the barrier, messaging is traveling in one direction, from the organization to the person. At times, this can include messaging that the intended recipient may not even perceive. This can include advertisements and conversations with acquaintances that the person may only acknowledge in passing. Only once the barrier is crossed, with information traveling in both directions – from the organization to the participant and from the participant to the organization

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

– is true engagement achieved.

There are several levels at which participants engage with an organization. The engagement begins when participants interact with the organization, which can include exploring the organization's website, social media, or other online content, "liking," "tweeting," "pinning," "sharing," or emailing this content, calling the organization or a current participant to learn more, etc. Participants can continue to engage more deeply by responding to material or conversation with participants or staff in the organization, becoming more involved in the organization through attending events, extensively participating with online content, and paying or donating in some way to participate with the organization. Some of the deepest levels of engagement can include taking a leadership role in the organization, making a donation considered substantial – one of the major donations someone may give in a year, or "joining" the organization in some way (if applicable). As mentioned earlier, the definition is a continuum, with participants moving back and forth fluidly through these categories over the course of days, weeks, and years. Participants themselves determine where along the spectrum they want to engage with certain organizations, but the marketing practices outlined in our research can help motivate people towards deeper levels of engagement.

Historical Engagement Trends in Judaism

While disengagement and disaffiliation seem like buzzwords of this generation, these issues have been at the forefront of Jewish thought for decades. In order to understand why Jews have become more disengaged, it is important to delve into the trends in American Judaism over the years. With the mass immigration of Jews from Europe to America in the late 1800s came the founding of a number of Jewish social service organizations (Diner, 1992). Organizations like the Jewish Federation and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society were established to offer support

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

to the new U.S. citizens (Diner, 1992).

Since the second half of the 18th century, individualism (Diner, 1992) played a crucial part in the American Jewish story. Since then, Jews became progressively adept at assimilating into American culture (Wolfson, 2013). Jewish communal membership rose in the 1950s and '60s after World War II, and a reconnection to "do-it-yourself" Judaism (Wolfson, 2013, p. 13) was sparked in the '70s. This era also saw the creation of the state of Israel, and Jews offered a new influx of donations and commitment to the community and Jewish organizations (Cohen & Eisen, 2000).

However, by the 1980s and '90s, Jews integrated into society and more frequently intermarried, and a sharp decline in traditional engagement began (Wolfson, 2013). In America more broadly memberships declined, with fewer people engaging in groups, both formal and informal (Putnam, 2000). The 1990's also brought with it an increased religious autonomy, or "sovereign self" Judaism (Wolfson, 2013; Cohen & Eisen, 2000). Jews express this individualism by deciding how and why they practice their Judaism at a given time. The choices are constantly in flux, including which Jewish organizations people want to connect with, if any (Cohen & Eisen, 2000).

The rise of individualism led to new ways of organizing. Instead of a "one size fits all" approach, niche Jewish organizations penetrated society over the last two decades (Windmueller 2007). People connected over shared interests both in person and online (Benor, 2012; Sales, 2007). Because of their connection with an individual journey, niche communities have drawn a significant number of previously disengaged Jews (Sales, 2007).

Jews in North America, especially young adults, have established niche communities that target specific audiences (Cohen, Landres, Kaunfer, & Shain, 2007). In the early stages,

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

independent *minyans*, rabbi-led emergent communities, and alternative emergent communities were some examples of these new, niche communities (Cohen, Landres, Kaunfer, & Shain, 2007) that bring together Jews through shared meaning and purpose (Cohen, 2010).

A redistribution of wealth during the 21st century has created mega-donors, who have the power to fully fund certain Jewish nonprofits if they are interested in supporting a specific cause (Windmueller, 2007). These mega-donors have been the force behind such organizations as Birthright Israel and Reboot (Windmueller, 2007). Donors are more interested in funding local, entrepreneurial nonprofits with specific focuses, rather than the large-scale umbrella organizations of the 1900s (Windmueller, 2007). The power held by donors who want to see how their donations are spent, in tandem with a more individualized Judaism, have been major influences on the nonprofit landscape, and the number of Jewish nonprofits established each year has risen dramatically (Windmueller, 2007).

Now, more than ever, there is a growing number of Jews of no religion (Cooperman, et. al., 2013), or “Nones” (Wolfson, 2013, p. 14), who are just some of the many diverse groups of Jews forming today. Most millennial Jews are unaffiliated with a congregation, which, in tandem with the increase in Jews of no religion, creates a fear that Jewish traditions, practices, and knowledge won’t transfer to future generations (Belzer & Miller, 2007). Survivalist-oriented Jewish leaders and researchers have viewed these trends negatively, while others have taken a more transformationist approach (Zelkowitz, 2013).

It is important to note that the number of religious “nones” is increasing in religious sects across America, not just in Judaism (Cooperman, et. al., 2015). In Judaism alone, one-in-five Jews consider themselves as having no religion (“Portrait of Jewish Americans,” p. 7). Additionally, research has emphasized the growing diversity of the Jewish population across

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

North America (Ukeles, Miller & Cohen, 2012). As a result, Jewish institutions used this opportunity to better analyze disengaged Jews and how increased Jewish diversity has changed the landscape of Jewish communities.

Recent Engagement Trends

Many scholars focused their attention on current engagement strategies within the Jewish community. Dr. Ron Wolfson, author of *Relational Judaism*, recommends relationship building as a way to reengage Jews with Jewish institutions. He explains that Jewish institutions must look at the “generational differences and proclivities” in order to better reach those disengaged with their Jewish heritage (Wolfson, 2013, p. 53). He emphasizes that personal connection, empathy, and awareness are just a few strategies that will allow Jewish communal professionals to reach their bottom-line goals in re-engaging with those who are no longer affiliated.

In addition to relationship building, Jewish institutions have also looked at how geography and personal interest impact engagement. For example, Synagogue 3000 conducted four experiments on engaging unaffiliated adults across the country (Cohen & Hoffman, 2011). Over the course of a year, Synagogue 3000 followed unaffiliated adult Jews in their 20s and 30s in Washington, D.C., St. Louis, Marin County, and Miami Beach, in order to re-engage these young Jews through customized programming. Each group was designed to have similar qualities, including a committed leader and institutional support. When the year concluded, all four groups “grew in significant Jewish ways,” demonstrated by a survey of participants (Cohen & Hoffman, 2011, p. 6).

Some scholars believe that education is the key to engagement. Education has been a Jewish value for centuries, and continuing this tradition can ensure that Jews grapple with Biblical and Talmudic texts and, in doing so, formulate a more concrete understanding of their

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

own Judaism (Paley, 2010).

Programs and services are developed in order to continue engagement and recruit new participants. To extend the engagement process for one-time experiences like Birthright, organizations have developed strategies to continue the connection with participants (Barton, 2014). These strategies include programs developed for participants before and after the main engagement experience, opportunities for participants to take on leadership roles, and concierge-style services where staff assist in finding appealing opportunities for participants (Barton, 2014). In order to create personal Jewish experiences for students, Hillel launched the Senior Jewish Educators program and Campus Entrepreneur Initiative (Cohen, Ukeles, Kopelowitz & Wolf 2010). The former are educators brought to campuses full time to elevate the level of knowledge a student can gain. The latter allows students to take initiative and build their own programming for peers (Cohen, Kopelowitz and Wolf 2010).

The Orthodox model of engagement might not be adopted by other Jewish sects, but it should be mentioned. Orthodox Judaism relies on a separatist model that can limit participants' connection to mainstream American culture, instead focusing members' attention on engagement with their Judaism (Horowitz, 2003).

Engagement can be seen as a useful tool to promote Jewish continuity throughout history. Just as Jews continue to shift their engagement towards new, nontraditional institutional options, Jewish institutions have evolved the communication techniques they use to reach out and engage members. Marketing and communication practices are essential to the engagement goals of any institution, but how have religious institutions broadly, and Jewish institutions more specifically, effectively utilized communication to engage Jews?

Marketing Practices for Engagement

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Historic trends in religious engagement marketing practices

For religious institutions, marketing can be defined as any activity performed by the institution to retain or increase membership (Wilde, 2001, p. 245). Before the late 1950's, the use of the term marketing by religious institutions in order to increase membership (Casidy & Tsarenko, 2014). Instead, terms like "outreach" were used (Ellis, 2015, 41). In fact, both the (Reform) Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) and the United Synagogue of America developed Committees on Propaganda in order to spread their message and recruit new members (Ellis, 2015). This term may be considered an archaic substitute for present day marketing.

Only after scholars considered the practical application of marketing strategies to religious recruitment did the concept begin to enter the conversation (Casidy & Tsarenko, 2014). These scholars include Culliton (1959), who wrote that religious organizations should adopt a business model in order to survive. Since that time, numerous studies have been published analyzing marketing strategies that potentially increase interest, recruitment, or retention within religious organizations (Casidy & Tsarenko, 2014).

In their research, Finke et al. (1996) pursued the concept that, in states and countries with religious free markets, competition emerges between religious institutions with the effect of raising overall religious participation. The researchers studied census data from the turn of the 19th century to determine if, as religious free markets opened, religious involvement increased. They observed that religious involvement increases dramatically due to a free market and, in turn, a pluralistic market, due to supply-side theory of competition. This theory has been debated in later research, and Voas et al. (2002) observed that religious participation cannot be measured based on pluralism, as there are other factors involved. Regardless, free market competition has

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

been determined to increase marketing among religious institutions (Finke et al., 1996).

Although historically religious institutions may not have considered their recruitment strategies as marketing practices (Casidy & Tsarenko, 2014), several scholars have since studied them as marketing strategies. In her research of religious female Irish missionaries from 1840-1940, Raftery (2013) observed that nunneries and religious orders effectively marketed to prospects by highlighting the opportunity to travel to exotic destinations and the economic stability of the position. She also noted that the marketing offered these women companionship and safety (Raftery, 2013). In their study, Chapman and O'Donoghue analyzed the marketing materials released by the Catholic religious teaching brothers from the 1930s-1960s (2013). The authors found that marketing pieces produced by the brothers were a useful strategy in drawing young prospects to the order. These recruitment pieces highlighted the order as a heroic group of men doing noble work, and noted plainly that the life of a brother was one filled with struggle, but with infinite rewards in the afterlife (Chapman & O'Donoghue, 2013). Both studies suggest that highlighting the lifestyle associated with membership was important. They also offer insight into more traditional marketing strategies of religious institutions and how these strategies have transformed over the years.

In looking more closely at Jewish communication trends, some marketing techniques have survived generations, while others have shifted dramatically over the decades. In the 30-year period after 1881, over 2 million Jews immigrated to America from Eastern Europe (Ellis, 2015). UAHC and United Synagogue of America considered this new audience in implementing their marketing strategy at the time (Ellis, 2015). UAHC chose to market more heavily to American-born Jews instead, by publishing materials in English rather than Yiddish, increasing marketing to small, rural communities rather than the cities, and charging more for dues, for

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

example (Ellis, 2015). The Conservative movement, however, used considerable marketing tactics to recruit new immigrants, targeting new Orthodox and secular immigrants and the children of immigrants. The institution printed in both English and Yiddish, focused its marketing strategies on large cities, and even established its headquarters in New York (Ellis, 2015).

By 1945, most Jews were second generation Americans or older, and Ellis (2015) observed that marketing goals changed to reflect this. With immigrants no longer an issue, UAHC was working to increase their market share above the less than 10% of American Jews they held as members at the time. By 1950, UAHC considered publishing a Yiddish newspaper and considered a shift of headquarters from Cincinnati to New York, as the East Coast housed almost 75% of Jews at the time (Ellis, 2015).

Recent trends in religious engagement marketing practices

Religious Institutions' more current marketing trends help us understand how Jewish institutional marketing is changing. In the 1990s, many studies of participation in religious organizations examined the costs of participation in comparison to benefits gained through membership (Casidy & Tsarenko, 2014). A study by Warner (1993) examined U.S. Census data, Gallup polls and historical writings for new trends in religious expression. He argued that a new religious paradigm was in effect, which offered Americans choice in their religious institution based on perceived benefits rather than established norms (Warner, 1993).

Casidy and Tsarenko used Warner's observations and studied if the perceived benefits of church attendance were measurably different for active attendees as opposed to those who attended irregularly (2014). In their study of 564 church members, the authors observed that both regular and irregular attendees received benefits from church attendance, regardless of frequency. Based

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

on their findings, Casidy and Tsarenko suggested that religious institutions market the spiritual and social benefits of attendance in order to increase desire to join. These studies illuminate that highlighting the benefits of membership continues to be a useful marketing strategy for religious organizations.

Published under the former name Mulyanegara, Casidy published another study examining branding techniques and their effect on church attendance in 13 churches in Melbourne (2011). He observed a significant correlation between positive assessment of the church's brand and increased involvement with the church. Positive brand evaluation also correlated with higher levels of perceived benefits of an institution. Mulyanegara suggested church marketing should clearly define and highlight benefits of membership to recruit new members. He produced a similar result in 2013 when he studied members of two Pentecostal churches serving approximately 600 members total. Casidy observed that participants related high levels of brand orientation – they recognized and understood the organizational brand – with positive levels of social and spiritual offerings (2013). These findings suggest that religious institutions should consider brand as a major factor in member retention as well as marketing to recruit new members.

White and Simas (2007) sought to determine if using business strategies from the secular world did, in fact, increase the performance of religious institutions. The study surveyed religious leaders in 230 churches from the five largest U.S. church denominations, the Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches. White and Simas observed that greater use of marketing positively correlated with increased membership, but only when the institution prioritized marketing. To determine which specific marketing strategies were most useful for churches, Webb (2012a) conducted a national survey of Protestant leaders. Through the survey,

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Webb found 24 marketing strategies used by the churches to increase membership. Those strategies used to recruit new members included personal referrals, sending a monthly newsletter, live streaming services, the number of services offered and content of those services, a global presence, the physical atmosphere, availability of leadership roles for women, development of relationships, and more (Webb, 2012a). Webb found that personal referrals and word-of-mouth were the most effective recruitment strategies. While not considered a marketing strategy, it is important to note that Webb (2012a) found the age of the congregation to be a major influence in attracting prospective members to the church – the younger the congregation, the more appealing it was for prospective members. Based on White and Simas' results, religious institutions should view marketing as a top priority in order to reap the benefits.

Understanding what draws current membership is important for religious institutions' marketing (Granger, Lu, Conduit, Veale, & Habel, 2014). In a 2014 study, Granger et al. hypothesized that religiosity, or, more specifically, belief in a higher power, drives membership for religious institutions. Through a survey of 163 participants, the researchers observed a significant relationship between religiosity and participation in a religious institution (Granger et al., 2014). While significant, these results do not consider other factors that may also contribute to participation. While religious institutions can use this data to strategize marketing, as American Jews' belief in God diminishes (Goodstein, 2013), this tactic may become less functional, especially since Jewishness can be understood as more than just religious identity.

Recent research has delved into some of the more practical recruitment methods in religious institutions. Webb (2012b) surveyed churches across the U.S. to explore differences in recruitment patterns, marketing strategies, and benefits offered. He noted that, from 2002 to 2012, churches with no denomination grew significantly faster than those connected to a specific

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

denomination, and attributed much of this growth to the popularity of leadership and the number of locations owned by a church (Webb, 2012b). By analyzing data from the nationally representative “Portraits of American Life Study,” Merino (2013) examined how religious social networks can contribute to religious affiliation and volunteerism. He suggests that having a network of friends and family with strong religious ties is a major contributing factor to someone’s religious affiliation. Merino also notes that the moral conscience weighs more heavily on those with strong religious social networks. Both of these studies analyze recruitment strategies not based in marketing. They point out that people’s perception of a religious institution can be developed through popular religious leadership and physical spaces, as well as the social networks of prospective members.

Non-traditional religious engagement marketing practices

In understanding religious marketing, it is also necessary to study less traditional and newer religious movements. By conducting interviews with church defectors and studying court documents about the Unification Church in Japan, Yoshihide examined recruitment and public relations strategies within new Japanese religious movements (2010). He observed that the church used door-to-door practices and recruited single youths or middle-aged women through the sale of goods, palm-reading, and other good luck services sought by the Japanese (Yoshihide, 2010). The study also found that the church offered a 12-session cultural course to familiarize prospects with the religion before sending members out into the field to continue the recruitment process. Yoshihide’s work generally sought to understand newer, more cult-like religions which may not use the same recruitment methods as more traditional religious organizations. However, many of these same strategies have been observed in other religious institutions, such as the Focolare movement.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Abela (2014) sought to determine if religious organizations should utilize marketing strategies that appeal to the imagination. He chose to study the Focolare movement, a Roman Catholic offshoot founded in Italy in 1943. Abela was intrigued by their lack of traditional marketing structure; the Focolare movement seems to have grown solely through word-of-mouth (Abela, 2014). Through one-on-one interviews with Focolare members, Abela observed that word-of-mouth marketing of religion is successful for growing a religious movement when it appeals to the imagination and uses language that is honest, poetic, and tells a story.

Minority religious engagement marketing practices

Certain strategies may be more practical depending on the size of the religious institution. To explore the most strategic recruitment practices for religious minority populations, Mohammadi, Jones, and Evans held one-on-one interviews with 13 participants from the Islamic community in South Australia (2008). Through this small sample, the researchers focused on the difficulties encountered in the recruitment process. They observed that the two most successful marketing strategies for this religious minority demographic were snowball sampling, where they requested additional names from their participants, and contact with key members of the Islamic community (Mohammadi, et al., 2008). Kuzma, Kuzma, and Kuzma (2009) focused their study on Protestant mega churches with 2,000 or more weekly attendees. They observed that mega-churches utilize a combination of marketing strategies, specifically book sales, viral marketing, weekend festivals, and requests for local personal and business sponsorships. Their research is useful in understanding recruitment strategies for religious institutions.

Recent trends in engagement: Jewish marketing practices

In the current Jewish institutional landscape, Ellis noted that organizational identity can play a large role in an organization's marketing strategy (2015). Established institutions take less

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

risk in developing marketing for outsiders so that they maintain organizational identity. Newer organizations generally have more malleability in their identity, and therefore take more marketing risks (Ellis, 2015).

Birthright uses several marketing practices to continue participants' connection after the trip to extend the impact of the experience (Barton, 2014). Birthright staff work to incorporate personal follow up with participants, plan trips from local communities so that participants live near one another and can connect when they return, and educate participants so they can take ownership of their Jewish journey at home and even take on lay leadership roles (Barton, 2014).

Social capital is an important marketing tool that some Jewish nonprofits have learned to leverage. Hillel, for example, introduced the Senior Jewish Educators/Campus Entrepreneurs Initiative, in which students were selected to tap into their peer groups in order to double the number of students engaged with Hillel (Zwilling & Miller, 2013). The educators helped to train the students on effective outreach techniques and teach them how to run Jewish programming, which the students used to develop events and experiences on campus (Zwilling & Miller, 2013). The ten-campus pilot program successfully reached 22,380 new students over the five-year period (Zwilling & Miller, 2013).

As the baby boomer generation ages, they offer a unique opportunity for Jewish nonprofit participation (Friedman Fixler & Steinhorn, 2010). Many boomers seek engagement opportunities that are one-time activities, rather than long-term, weekly or monthly commitments. To market to this group, organizations need to offer short-term opportunities that utilize boomers' skillsets and peak their interests (Friedman Fixler & Steinhorn, 2010).

An unexpected marketing tool can be harnessed when organizations collaborate. In one example, seven nonprofits in Baltimore convened and created a Community of Practice, in which

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

professionals from each organization come together to share ideas, brainstorm, and develop new programming (Frank & Nicolson, 2013). Together, the professionals helped their individual organizations become more efficient, while also writing a grant for a collaborative project helping children and families (Frank & Nicolson, 2013).

Definitions

Before we discuss our methods and results, it is important to define some of the keywords we used in our research.

Targeted Messaging

When producing marketing materials and developing copy for websites, print materials, and social media – to name a few – organizational staff are trying to create a message that helps the message recipient understand who the organization is and what it does (Brown, Dacin, Pratt, & Whetten, 2006). Brown et al. explain that there are four distinct viewpoints for every organization:

1. The internal viewpoint, which determines how those inside the organization understand it (what an organization thinks of itself)
2. The viewpoint that those internal to the organization want those outside the organization to hold (what an organization wants others to think of it)
3. The understanding those internal to the organization have about what viewpoint those outside the organization actually hold (what the organization thinks people think of it)
4. The viewpoint that those outside the organization actually hold about the organization (what people actually think of the organization)

In order to produce messaging that satisfies each of these viewpoints, the organizational staff must understand the recipient of the messaging. For example, in viewpoint 2, the organizational

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

staff must determine what language it should use to ensure that those outside of the organization understand the mission, vision, and style of the organization.

Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing has often been cited as a major factor influencing customer behavior (Buttle, 1998). In fact, studies have found that WOM is more effective than any other marketing strategy, and nine times more effective at changing people's opinions positively from a negative or neutral stance (Buttle, 1998). It can be spread from one customer to another – or in our research, one participant to another, by influencers and by employees, in person or virtually (Buttle, 1998). WOM can be a major factor in shaping people's thoughts, behaviors and feelings, especially because the parties involved are considered trustworthy (Buttle, 1998).

Generally, WOM is assumed to be spread voluntarily, with participants communicating about an organization (for example) of their own volition. However, nowadays, organizations are strategically creating opportunities for WOM on their behalf (Buttle, 1998). This includes ambassador programs, newcomer committees, and direct asks to connectors in the community. These techniques are considered word-of-mouth marketing, and when an organization selects a number of people to act as representatives to spread information about a product or service, the ripple effect can be enormous (Groeger & Buttle, 2014).

The compiled research provides some insight into engagement, but there is much to learn. Our research will give more clarity into the marketing strategies Jewish nonprofits can utilize to engage disengaged Jews.

Methods

Interview Procedure

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

A series of 22 in-person and over-the-phone interviews were conducted from October 2016 to December 2016. Interviews lasted anywhere from 15 minutes to 52 minutes. One or both of us conducted each interview.

Participants included professional staff, lay leadership, and involved community members from a range of Jewish nonprofit organizations in several spheres, including organizations that cater to young adults, specialty camps, emergent congregations, multi-faith communities, intentional communities, Jewish farming, and organizations serving young families and Jews of color. These were chosen as examples of nonprofits that are taking important strides in engaging previously disengaged Jews. There has been significant discourse in the Jewish community focused on organizations doing this meaningful work, and we developed our list based on information from colleagues in our Jewish communal professional networks and in our graduate program in Jewish Nonprofit Management.

The professional staff we interviewed included three Executive Directors, two Chief Executive Officers, two Founders, two Directors, one Regional Director, one Director of Marketing and Communications, one Director of Engagement and Leadership, one Director of Community Development and Young Adult Engagement, one Director of Community Engagement, one Director of Community Expansion, one Communications Manager, three Assistant Directors, one Rabbi, and three lay members of a Communications Committee. The staff worked at Moishe House, Ikar, Urban Adamah, Pico Union Project, Sinai Temple's Atid program, Chai Village, NuRoots (a project of The Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles), The Kitchen, PJ Library, Camp Inc., Be'chol Lashon, and One Table. Five of the Jewish nonprofit organizations were located in Los Angeles, two were located in the San Francisco Bay area, one in Colorado, two national, and three international. We interviewed five involved

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

community members, including one from Urban Adamah, one from The Kitchen, and three from Chai Village.

Interview Details

We created two sets of interview questions, one for the professional and lay staff and one for the previously disengaged community members. Our interview with staff consisted of 24 questions focusing on three main areas. The first set of questions focused on specifics of the organization where the respondent worked. An example question was “What are your organization's core values?” The second area focused on how the organization staff measures engagement of its community members. An example question was “In your opinion, what percentage of your membership do you believe was disengaged with the Jewish community before joining your organization?” The final area focused on the marketing practices the organization’s staff utilize to connect with its members, seek new members, and communicate with a larger target audience. An example question was “Can you take us through your initial steps when first connecting with disengaged members?” The interview guide can be seen in Appendix A.

Our interviews with participants consisted of 22 questions focusing on three main areas. The first questions focused on the participant’s past engagement history. An example question was “If any, what Jewish organizations were you connected with in the past?” The second area focused on how the participant became engaged with a Jewish organization. An example question was “How were you drawn to [this particular organization]?” The final area focused on how the organization communicated with the participant through various marketing practices. An example question was “How often do you hear from [this particular organization] by email?” The interview guide can be seen in Appendix B.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Content Analysis Procedure

Interviews gave us a glimpse into the organization from the perspective of the staff and participants, but we also wanted to view the organization from the perspective of non-participants. To accomplish this goal, we reviewed the websites and main social media accounts of each of the nonprofits. Due to time limitations, we could not review each organization's full website, but focused on the Homepage and "About" page for each, as these are pages that a new visitor might seek out first. The "About" section also showcases how the organizations communicate their main messages. We also reviewed the main social media accounts of each organization to observe how they project their target messages in the social media sphere. While many organizations have dozens of social media accounts administered by various staff and participants, we focused only on the main, public accounts managed by the organization.

Content Analysis Details

The content analysis sample was composed of websites and social media accounts of 17 Jewish nonprofits – the ones with staff interviews plus four additional organizations seen as taking strides to reach out to disengaged Jews: Jew Belong, Reboot, JCC Maccabi, and Bend the Arc. The sample includes 17 websites and 51 social media profiles – several organizations had more than one main social media account, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube and/or Vimeo (see Appendix F for the website codebook and Appendix G for the social media codebook). Data analysis of the content was performed February 4, 2016.

The website homepages and "About" sections were coded for the following 10 variables:

1. Number of Photos on Homepage
2. Number of Videos on Homepage
3. Number of Paragraphs on Homepage

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

4. Number of Tabs on Main Navigation
5. Ease of Use of Main Navigation – determined based on how obvious the navigational headers seemed
6. Targeted Messaging – determined by how much the website used text, images and videos to target its audience
7. Website Aesthetics – determined based on the overall look of the homepage and “About” page
8. Accessibility of Social Media Feeds
9. Number of Paragraphs on the “About” Page
10. Webpage Responsiveness on Phone.

For social media content analysis, a total of 20 variables were coded for the six social media platforms:

1. Number of Main Social Media Pages Associated with the Nonprofit – not coded for smaller, more individual social media profiles of certain nonprofits.
2. If a Nonprofit has a Facebook Account
3. Number of Facebook Followers
4. Number of Facebook Likes
5. Average Facebook Review Rating
6. Number of Facebook Reviewers
7. If a Nonprofit has a Twitter Account
8. Number of Twitter Followers
9. Number of Tweets
10. If a Nonprofit has an Instagram Account

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

11. Number of Instagram Followers
12. Number of Instagram Posts
13. If a Nonprofit has a Pinterest Account
14. Number of Pinterest Followers
15. Number of Pins
16. If a Nonprofit has a YouTube or Vimeo Account
17. Number of YouTube/Vimeo Subscribers
18. Number of YouTube/Vimeo Videos
19. Number of YouTube/Vimeo Video Views
20. Targeted Messaging on Social Media Channels – determined how much the social media posts used text, images, and videos to target its audience.

We analyzed some of these variables statistically, though most data were analyzed qualitatively. Each of us analyzed the latent variables independently. Later, we discussed our choices and made compromises or took the average of our evaluations.

Results

Upon completion of the interviews and content analysis, we explored the ways – sometimes differing, but mostly similar – in which staff of Jewish organizations understand engagement and implement their vision for engagement. Several organizational staff explained how their definition for engagement aligns with its mission. Several organizational staff explained how their definition for engagement aligns with its mission.

Organizational Understanding of Engagement

We asked Jewish professionals and participants to define the term “engagement.” Many organizational staff and participants responded with general definitions, as well as their own

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

personal definitions for engagement. Birthright Israel's Director of Communication, Fertel

Weinstein, even suggested engagement is best when defined personally. She said:

[Engagement is] something that you define as an individual... There is no clear cut path... It should be something that is for your entire life – that you're always looking for ways to connect with and engage on campus in your home community with synagogues, with Israel, in whatever way is personal to you (November 18, 2016).

Below are examples of some of the definitions that we felt best added to the research.

Engagement as a spectrum

Benisty, the participant of The Kitchen quoted in the introduction, discussed how there are different levels of engagement. He explained that he considers himself engaged because he shows up to events and services. He has also taken on more responsibility within the synagogue because he felt like it was the next step for him (November 4, 2016).

Adam Berman, Founder of Urban Adamah, explained that his organization looks at engagement similarly. For example, he said:

“We have deep levels of engagement and we have superficial levels of engagement and different kinds of doorways that are open to different types of people who are looking for the kind of programming and kind of depth that we offer.”

- Adam Berman (September 20, 2016)

Ari Eisnestadt, a participant from Urban Adamah, shared his experience engaging with the organization. He said that even with a Jewish upbringing, he was worried that Urban Adamah wouldn't engage him. However, he described the organization “as engaging at every level of Judaism, which is both accessible and inclusive to many kinds” (October 27, 2017).

Connecting with the people

Engagement was also defined as people connecting with other people or with the organization. Benarie noted that engagement can be expressed by a Moishe House participant's

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

direct involvement in a community. Director of NuRoots Community Fellowship, Zack Lodmer, also highlighted that engagement opportunities are done in one of two ways: “engaging on a one-on-one level and at the community level” (September 30, 2016), meaning NuRoots focuses its energy on personal relationships both one-on-one and in small group settings.

Jennifer Green, Assistant Director of NuRoots Community Fellowship, shared how she likes to think about her engagement work as connecting people to each other. She’ll have conversations with people “about anything that’s related to community, Judaism, spirituality” (November 17, 2016). From those conversations she thinks about who is looking for something similar and how to connect them together.

Sinai Temple’s vision of engagement also involves building and maintaining relationships. Rabbi Jason Fruithandler said that these relationships should ideally connect a participant to the synagogue, other participants, and the rabbis (September 29, 2016). PJ Library defines engagement similarly. Judi Wisch, Director of Community Engagement for PJ Library, said that engagement for the organization means that people are actively pursuing Jewishness in homes and communities, and that PJ Library is “connecting families to Judaism, connecting them to each other, and connecting them to the Jewish community around them” (September 23, 2016).

Pamela Fertel Weinstein explained that Birthright hopes to engage Jews ages 18-26 beyond their 10-day journey in Israel. Instead, Birthright wants to “ensure the future of the Jewish people by strengthening Jewish identity through Jewish communities, connecting people to Israel, and ... [continuing] their engagement with the community here in the United States” (November 18, 2016).

Connecting with programming

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Organizational staff, like Meredith Hoffa, Communications Manager of Ikar, explain how the organization provides programming and experiences in order to engage more individuals at every level (October 28, 2016). Benarie shared that some believe millennials are disengaged predominantly because they are “selfish..., narcissistic..., don’t want community and don’t want to be involved with everything.” She has found these statements to be false based on her experiences with Moishe House residents and participants and believes that when a nonprofit offers programming that interest millennials, they are likely to engage (September 2, 2016). She also explained that engagement is quantified by the number of Jews aged 22-35 both developing and attending Moishe House programming, which they execute through “peer-led engagement” (September 2, 2016).

Rabbi Fruithandler noted that Sinai Temple has put an emphasis on member engagement in recent years (September 29, 2016). When planning programming for the synagogue, the staff and board ask the questions, “How does this create more engagement?”, “What relationships are being built here?”, and “How are we maintaining those relationships and who is doing it?” (September 29, 2016).

Communication Strategies That Build Bridges

We found that Jewish nonprofits can effectively harness various communication strategies to engage previously disengaged Jews. The patterns we found can be organized into 12 categories: niche organizations, targeted messaging, web design, word-of-mouth, print marketing, email marketing, social media, external marketing, analytics, “meeting them where they are,” relational Judaism, and newcomer follow-up.

Niche organizations

Throughout the interviews, many Jewish nonprofit professionals explained that their

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

development as a niche organization has helped engage participants who may not have been enticed by more traditional Jewish nonprofits. We categorized these niche organizations into eight subcategories: young adults, specialty camps, emergent synagogues, multi-faith communities, intentional communities, environmental, young families, and Jews of color.

Young adults

We interviewed five organizations that worked specifically with young adults in their 20s and 30s. While many of the other organizations interviewed also serve the young adult community, these five are focused solely on engagement with young adults. We found that they attract participants by offering a variety of customized engagement options.

Jason Boschan, Director of Marketing and Communications of Moishe House, explained why the young adult community is in need of great attention and care. He explained, “Typically people go to Hebrew school or they go to college and when they come out from that in their early 20’s, they simply want to get away” (September 30, 2016). To this point, Boschan and his team has created an organization that focuses their attention mainly on engagement for young adults in their 20’s.

Moishe House provided details for how it achieves success. Benarie, Senior Regional Director: West of Moishe House, shared that, when she first began her journey with Moishe House as a resident, she was under the impression that the staff was dictating the program. She learned as a resident, and now as a professional for the organization, that “We have guidelines, but we really let them do whatever they want to do for the most part” (September 2, 2016).

Another organization focusing on building community for people in their 20s and 30s in Los Angeles is NuRoots. Lodmer explained that the organization doesn’t place an emphasis on native Angelinos or transplants. Instead, this fledgling organization focuses on community

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

organizing. He said:

You're either in one of our circles or one of our circles' circles, and eventually if you're looking for us and we're looking for you, we'll find each other, we'll have coffee, you'd come to an event, you'd progress on your Jewish journey, you'd tell your friends, you'd come back, we'd continue doing that, we'd continue putting out... meaningful, spiritual, fun, community oriented events with a Jewish learning component... We find each other no matter where you're from, we go forward together. (September 30, 2016)

Birtheright Israel, on the other hand, spoke directly about its efforts to customize the Birtheright Israel experience, in hopes to engage more participants. Fertel Weinstein, Director of Communication, explained, "It's really about a marketplace of experiences and opportunities" (November 18, 2016). Meaning, if participants visit the Birtheright Israel website, they can decide if they want to go on a culinary trip, an LGBTQ trip, or an array of curated options.

For this reason, Birtheright Israel has re-designed its registration process to allow for these customizations. Fertel Weinstein clarified, "If you want to go [on Birtheright] ... you will be able to find trips just... filtering by community... It's less about the trip operator now. It's more about what type of experience you want." (November 18, 2016).

Specialty camps

According to the Foundation for Jewish Camp, more than 200,000 campers and counselors attend Jewish camp annually ("Our History," 2017). This number incorporates campers and counselors who are attending specialty camps across North America. Today, campers and counselors can choose to attend Jewish summer camps that focus on the arts, sports, and much more ("Find a Camp," 2017). We interviewed Josh Pierce, Chief Camp Officer of Camp Inc., to learn how a specialty camp centered around entrepreneurship, business, and technology engages prospective campers.

Pierce understands that his target market is niche. He seeks to attract "Jewish teens from all over the world [and teach them] how to start their own businesses, how to take an idea and

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

turn it into reality.” He created three tracks for Camp Inc.: “One is kind of like a Shark Tank-type track, where you’re ... putting pitches together. There’s a Coding Track... and there’s a Marketing and Design track which is all about marketing strategy as well as graphic design and 3d printing skills.” As a result, Pierce noted that, to fill his camp, he needs to engage prospective campers who have a strong passion for these interests (October 20, 2016).

Emergent congregations

We interviewed two emergent congregations – The Kitchen and IKAR. The staff from both congregations described the ways in which they have distinguished themselves, in order to attract participants. Lisa Motenko, Director of Community Development and Young Adult Engagement of The Kitchen, described the organization as “particularly welcoming to LGBTQ people, to ... couples that are interfaith and Jews who may have had baggage around their Jewish experience growing up.” For this reason, she believes that The Kitchen is a safe space for these individuals where they can “let their guard down and say ‘Okay, it’s cool here’” (September 22, 2016).

Benisty, a Kitchen participant, explained some of the ways in which the congregation is unique for him. He explained that the synagogue had a “very different approach to services” with a “redesigned concept of the synagogue.” Benisty added:

“I think of The Kitchen as almost orthogonal to the spectrum of Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform because it really just sort of went in this 90 degree direction, and tried to rethink their whole concept from scratch.”

– Tal Benisty (November 4, 2016)

Similar to The Kitchen, IKAR is another emergent synagogue model. Matthew Weintraub, Assistant Director of IKAR, discussed some of the values associated with the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

congregation. He said:

The most important piece is that, by being a community that's open to others, that is not judgmental, that's inclusive, social justice-oriented, and meeting people where they're at and motivating positive growth and change, we're able to connect to people in a positive way. (October 28, 2016)

Multi-faith

The founder of Pico Union Project, Craig Taubman, restored the oldest synagogue in Los Angeles to house his nonprofit. This organization focuses on the Jewish value “love your neighbor” (Lasker, September 23, 2016). Since its revival, Pico Union Project's staff believe “in order for you to love your neighbor, you have to get to know your neighbor and you have to know yourself,” as Executive Director Dr. Zachary Lasker noted in our interview (September 23, 2016).

Consequently, Pico Union Project has built a community that encourages people to engage with each other and to “really be able to stop and listen and ask questions respectfully and... let it marinate” (Lasker, September 23, 2016). Taubman shared a dialogue that took place during a recent board meeting that emphasizes this point and the organization's commitment to interfaith dialogue. He said, “Three people from different faith communities talked about their relationship with God and the crisis that they have with a world that's unjust” (September 23, 2016).

Intentional communities

According to the Oxford Dictionary, an intentional community is a “self-contained, planned community that attempts to pursue a peaceful ideal, as opposed to a community created and run without an organizing principle” (“Intentional Communities,” 2010). Chai Village is an example of a Los Angeles-based intentional community. This recently developed community is focused around “helping people age in place, in their own home” (Servi, October 21, 2016).

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Environmental

We interviewed Adam Berman, founder of Urban Adamah, to learn about the Jewish connection with the environmental movement. He explained that Urban Adamah “speak[s] to people who are interested in farming, social justice, or progressive Judaism.” While he believes that “the organization is primarily a millennial organization... there’s lots of people of different ages that come [to Urban Adamah], as well” (September 20, 2016).

This niche community speaks to those who are looking for a “Judaism that’s really not parochial, that’s not afraid to bring in other spiritual traditions, in terms of the celebration of Jewish life” (Berman, September 20, 2016). Additionally, Berman described the organization as a “body and a heart-centered approach to Judaism, more than a head-centered approach” (September 20, 2016). Ari Eisenstadt, an Urban Adamah Fellow, endorsed his Jewish farming experience. He said:

I think what Urban Adamah has going [for it] is attributed to the communal outdoor space that is aimed at engaging people at a level of Judaism which is both accessible and inclusive to many... levels of Judaism which is really wonderful. It’s also a community full of young people around my age, which is usually appealing. (October 27, 2016)

Young families

PJ Library is an example of an organization geared toward young families. Wisch, Director of Community Engagement of PJ Library, described the organization as “a Jewish literacy project.” The organization began as a book program, but has evolved into a service that develops programming, connects families with music, and sends books monthly to families in different countries and in different languages (September 23, 2016).

Jews of color

The final niche community we identified is Jews of Color. Diane Tobin, Chief Executive Officer of Be’chol Lashon, explained that her organization is driven to grow and strengthen the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Jewish community by celebrating ethnic, cultural, and racial inclusiveness. Tobin shared, “It’s better for us to focus on our multicultural identity as a global people...thinking about who are as a people” (October 21, 2016). They do this by connecting their community members with multicultural thought leaders and by running a camp for diverse populations from the Bay Area and across the globe, for example.

Targeted messaging

How organizations find their voice

As mentioned earlier, targeted messaging includes language and visuals developed by an organization’s staff with their target audience in mind. For organizations with multiple target audiences, this can mean producing multiple, segmented messages for the different sectors. Many of the nonprofit professionals interviewed had a keen awareness of the need to target their messaging and could easily describe how the messaging they produce connects with the audience they intend to draw. Hoffa had a very good idea of what made IKAR stand out, and how she and other staff use messaging that speaks to the IKAR audience. She said:

IKAR is a Jewish spiritual community, and one of [the] main tenets upon which we operate is that of inclusivity. We aim to be a sort of traditional Jewish spiritual center, but we also like to present ourselves as very welcoming, inclusive, and we want people of all stripes to feel comfortable here. We also tend to be an aggressive social justice-minded community – we really focus on moving our community members to make changes in the world and make a difference that they believe in. (October 28, 2016)

Hoffa highlighted how the core values of IKAR are used in the targeted messaging of the organization. In marketing, IKAR staff use language to express openness, inclusivity, and comfort. The organization also includes social justice information on-message with IKAR’s motivations.

Similar to IKAR, several other organizations were aware of how their targeted messaging is produced with the organization’s mission in mind. Tobin at Be’chol Lashon described the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

organization's non-judgmental attitudes towards intermarriage. She said, "It doesn't matter if they're converted or not, our goal is to help them on their journey in a positive way" (October 21, 2016). The organizational staff prove this by using language that affirms this goal. Berman explained that the messaging is determined based on the organizational brand. He said:

"It's really about developing a brand that we think resonates with our target audience. So if I had to describe the brand I'd say the brand is farmy, edgy, and punny."

- Adam Berman (September 20, 2016)

Motenko explained that the founders of The Kitchen believed in a message of "low barrier, high content" (September 26, 2016), which the organization uses to describe the experience someone can have when they participate.

When an organization has a set mission and vision, the marketing and other organizational staff must determine the language that will describe this mission to their target audience. Matt Weintraub of IKAR said, "Language is important in engagement... We try to achieve a consistent voice that is holy and aspirational yet funny, clever, and accommodational" (October 28, 2016). Lodmer of NuRoots described the organization's voice with a number of keywords: "... to connect, create, inspire, engage are some of the taglines that we use in our marketing" (September 30, 2016). The Kitchen staff have infused a "friendly, personal language that's non-threatening and inclusive" into every text they produce, including the website, communications with participants and interested parties, and print materials displayed during services (Motenko, September 26, 2016). For these organizations, in order to enunciate their values, the staff echo the language in their marketing materials.

Berman shared a few examples of the farmy, edgy, and punny messaging Urban Adamah uses to target their audience. In a recent job posting, the staff sent out an email with an image of

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

their fellows jumping in the air and the text “We’re High-ering.” In an email announcing the return of the annual Eat Pray Lulav festival, the organization considered using the tagline “It’s baaaack!” next to an image of a goat (Berman, September 20, 2016). In both examples, the messaging focus Berman described is evident.

An organization’s messaging can change over the years as the target audience, the way an organization understands its audience, or the way the audience consumes marketing shifts. This happened with Birthright Israel. “When I first started, there was imagery of the Kotel, or imagery of challah and “Celebrate Shabbat in Israel,” and that only speaks to a certain demographic,” Fertel Weinstein reminisced. She explained that while there was a target audience for that message, others felt a disconnect. “If you’re the unaffiliated or unaware-of-Birthright-Israel audience, that’s not gonna resonate with you.” Birthright altered the messaging to attract a more diverse audience. They focused on images of the trip participants having fun together, rather than those of holy sites. Fertel Weinstein said they wanted interested parties to “see yourself in the photo and say, ‘Those people look like they’d be my friends.’ ‘Those are the people I go to school with.’ ‘Those are the people I work with’ ... something that you could see yourself in, ... rather than just saying, ‘This is Israel and this is Jewish.’” To continue this voice into the photos, the marketing campaigns use Instagram and GoPro-style image filters to tap into image trends currently utilized by twenty-somethings on social media (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016).

Some nonprofits allow local chapters to define their individual voices under the broader organizational umbrella. We noted this most with nonprofits with geographically specific target audiences. Benarie of Moishe House, for example, explained that one mission of the organization is “strengthening and empowering leaders.” In order to do this, the staff allow each house in the system to determine their own voice (Benarie, September 2, 2016). This autonomy helps each

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

house discover the unique messaging that speaks to their audience. Similarly, PJ Library offers each branch of the larger organization autonomy. Wisch explained that the organization is “national, implemented locally” (September 23, 2016), meaning that each local partner can adapt the marketing to meet their needs.

How participants hear targeted messaging

When an organizational staff have developed a message that authentically connects to what the organization does and to the audience they hope to target, it is evident to those who hear it. The Kitchen has incorporated a strong commitment to social justice into the messaging and participant Benisty could tell right away:

Hearing Rabbi Noa talk about... issues of injustice in society here in the States, I was like, ‘Oh, somebody is saying these things out loud ... and that we should do something about it’ ... I think that might have been kind of the clincher, at which point I was like, ‘OK, this is something I actually look forward to going’ ... that’s kind of how it became my thing. (November 4, 2016)

Benisty also noted the friendly, “low barrier, high content” (Motenko, September 26, 2016) voice of The Kitchen’s email marketing. He called them “cheeky” and said, “They have an excellent voice and tone... They’re well written, they’re well designed... It never feels like a drag.” Eisenstadt, an Urban Adamah participant, noted the personalization and sense of welcoming in his correspondence with the organization. He distinctly remembered that in his first emails from Urban Adamah, the email header included “graphics of flowers plastered on top” that seemed warm and inviting. He also noted that the language felt personal, “I was really touched” (October 27, 2016).

Benisty recalled a newsletter from a congregation he found while “synagogue shopping” with his wife. In that instance, the congregation hadn’t written the email with an audience in mind, and Benisty could tell. He noted that it felt overwhelming. He said, “It was like every

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

birth, every death, every week... you got your commentary notes from the board. It was... just kind of drab and very rote... I guess The Kitchen is ... just more valuable information or a more pleasant interaction” (November 4, 2016). The messaging at the first congregation may not have connected with Benisty because he was not the target audience, but more likely, the newsletter hadn’t been written with any target in mind. Very few prospective participants, and even some current participants, will be stimulated by a newsletter filled with long lists and notes from past meetings. Based on the strong visceral reactions participants felt about each organization’s messaging, it is easy to see how important it is to develop a nonprofit’s personality and voice.

Web design

Why web design is important

Websites are considered the online storefront of organizations (Nager, 2016). Because of this, Jewish nonprofit professionals must take special care in designing the websites for their organizations. Online design trends change rapidly, and an organization must keep its site current or it runs the risk of looking old and outdated (Krug, 2014). It is especially important to note that, in more recent years, visitors can view a website on multiple platforms. While in the past, computers were the only way to access the Web, now people use computers, smart phones, and tablets, so websites have to be dynamic (Krug, 2014). The internet itself has become increasingly user-friendly and easy to navigate. If an organization’s site is not, a visitor can become frustrated and “bounce” off (Krug, 2014). On top of that, sites must incorporate the organization’s targeted messaging. If a nonprofit doesn’t consider these elements for the website, it could miss out on engaging an entire subset of people searching online for where they belong.

Benisty is a great example of someone seeking out community online. He explained that, when he first discovered The Kitchen’s website, he immediately saw how different it was from

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

other synagogue sites. He noted that the visual design of the site was very appealing: “I stumbled on the website, it looked super different, I browsed around. I was like, ‘Oh, this is kind of super interesting’” (November 4, 2016).

How these nonprofits ace web design

During the course of the interviews, we learned that some organizations knew their websites needed alterations. In the past, Birthright Israel suffered from an unwieldy list of trip options on their website (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016). Before the update, Fertel Weinstein said that visitors would come to the site to look for a trip and “say, ‘Oh my goodness, it’s so overwhelming,’ and X out on the website.” To lower the number of times this happened, Birthright revamped the navigation to make it more user-friendly. Now, the website is organized by a visitor’s interests, rather than by which organization leads the trip. “The whole website and registration process was just updated and relaunched in September... to make it a faster, more seamless, easy-to-navigate experience to help find the right trip for you, and to actually complete your application” (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016).

Wisch from PJ Library noted a similar transition for her organization after realizing that some people were unable to get books delivered to their homes. “When you go online to register, you have to put in your zip code and it tells you what your community is, and it used to say, ‘Sorry, there’s no PJ Library in your community.’” She explained that, if your zip code was outside of the parameters of PJ Library communities, you were out of luck. PJ Library quickly came up with a solution. Now, if a zip code is not within a PJ Library’s geographic boundary, that family goes into a national pool and books are delivered by the national organization (Wisch, September 23, 2016).

Once people hear about an organization, they will often navigate the website first.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Eisenstadt said that, when first discovering Urban Adamah, “I think I read through the website, the FAQ, I read all of the fellowship details, I don’t think that I emailed for more information. I think I just mined the website and I was like this sounds good, why don’t I apply” (October 27, 2016). If the website had been difficult to navigate or outdated, Eisenstadt might have made a different choice and Urban Adamah may have lost a potential participant.

Website content analysis

After the interviews, we analyzed each of the organization’s websites, as well as a few nonprofits that fit our criteria but that we were unable to contact for an interview. While all 17 of these organizations stand out as having made strides engaging previously disengaged Jews, some websites were less user-friendly and inviting than expected, with fewer calls to action. Other websites stood out as shining examples. We have outlined what we discovered below.

Organization	Photos	Videos	Paragraphs	Tabs	Navigation Ease	Brand Voice	Aesthetics	Social	About Paragraphs	Responsive
Atid @ Sinai Temple	5	0	0	6	5	2	2	2	8	1
Be'chol Lashon	76	0	2	12	1	4	1	2	16	1
Bend the Arc	7	0	11	7	3	4	3	3	7	2
Birthright	16	0	18	6	5	3.5	5	2	6	2
Camp Inc.	8	0	12	3	3	3	3.5	2	15	2
Chai Village	10	0	4	9	5	3.5	2	1	4	2
IKAR	1	1	0	9	4	4	3	2	4	2
JewBelong	3	0	2	12	4.5	5	4.5	3	4	2
Maccabi at the JCC	6	1	5	7	3	3	3.5	2	9	2
Moishe House	4	1	2	7	2	2	3	3	2	2
NuRoots	12	0	9	6	4.5	4.5	5	2	8	2
One Table	11	0	2	8	5	5	5	2	14	2
P.J. Library	1	1	3	5	5	4	4.5	3	6	2
Pico Union Project	17	1	8	9	3	3	2	3	12	1
Reboot	3	0	21	6	3.5	3	4	2	1	2
The Kitchen	0	1	0	6	4	5	4	2	7	2
Urban Adamah	7	0	5	6	4	3	3.5	2	11	2
Mean	10.63	0.35	6.12	7.29	3.79	3.62	3.44	2.24	7.88	1.82

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Table 2. Website Content Analysis

Photos

Every website analyzed had at least one photo on the homepage. The average number of photos on the homepages was 11, but that included an outlier with 76 photos. Once we remove this outlier, the average number of photos on the homepages was just under seven. Many photos feature participants of the nonprofit engaged in an organizational activity, such as maintaining plants on a farm, socializing at an event, or joined in prayer at a service. Others feature participants who are not engaged in an activity – these include close-up photos and group photos. These photos often showcase examples of participants so that visitors have a greater sense of the types of people who are involved. Other photos include images of the organization’s building, or, in the case of Urban Adamah, a goat. These examples are much less prevalent.

Videos

About a third of the websites featured a video on their homepage. No websites had more than one video on the homepage. One outlier, The Kitchen, incorporated a video on the homepage with little additional text, causing the video to stand out as a bold statement. Many of these videos are introductory, giving a website visitor a taste of the organization. The Kitchen’s video specifically welcomes visitors to the website, an interesting twist on the standard videos. Other videos, like on the PJ Library website, are professionally edited commercials for the organization. Rather than serving as an introduction, the video available on Pico Union Project’s website was about the organization’s commitment to American values. It is obvious through these examples that video content varied broadly, with a few videos introducing the organization, but most featuring diverse content.

Navigation

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Website clarity is an important factor for new visitors, and an easy-to-understand navigation is a helpful piece of this. Most of the websites analyzed had six main navigation links, but the average was just over seven. Standard navigation included headings such as “Home,” “About Us,” “Learn,” “Calendar.” Some organizations utilized less common headings that were still easy to navigate but connect more specifically to the organization stylistically. IKAR lists “Be Inspired” as a navigational option that takes visitors to various videos, sermons, and other writings. The Kitchen highlights two sections of their website distinctly in the navigation, “Our Always” and “Our Newest.” “Our Always” features information about events, long-standing programs, and services, while “Our Newest” features new ventures the organization hopes to feature. Jew Belong uses “More Cool Stuff” to feature external websites, a great way to showcase partner and other nonprofit organizations and offer something extra to visitors.

A few sites used confusing primary navigation titles, limiting new visitors. Often this was due to a reliance on intra-organizational jargon. Some examples include Moishe House’s use of “MHWOW” (which stands for Moishe House Without Walls) as a navigation title – an acronym new visitors would not likely understand – or IKAR’s use of “Jewish Emergent Network” as a navigation title – a collaborative partnership unknown by outsiders. Often, organizations utilized the same font for the navigation titles as their logo font. This strategy helps to weave the organizational brand into the website. However, when the logo font is difficult to read, it can throw off a visitor.

Only two of the organizations analyzed incorporate shops on their websites, and both were easily accessed in the main navigation. Also, both shops were unique ways to showcase brand and offered a tangible good to participants. Reboot’s store featured recommended books, kosher sweets, gourmet foods, and Jewish themed attire and games. The Kitchen’s shop included

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

swag in the form of *haggadot* and games designed and produced by the nonprofit, as well as opportunities to gift specific items back to the organization. Both shops helped to relay the personality of the organization to visitors and allowed them to order something from the organization that can serve as a physical reminder of the organization.

Aesthetics

Website aesthetics are just as important as the aesthetics of a nonprofit's office building, as this is the online storefront of the organization (Nager, 2016). In some cases, it can be even more important, as this is the first place many interested parties look for information (Krug, 2014) Based on the understanding that aesthetics comes with a personal bias, not everyone who reviews the nonprofit organization's websites analyzed by the researchers will draw the same conclusions. To offset some of these discrepancies, a personal definition of website aesthetics was developed for analysis (see Appendix F). On average, the nonprofit's websites scored almost 3.5 out of 5 on aesthetics, just between some and several pleasing aesthetic elements. Some websites stood out as extremely aesthetically pleasing (a score of 5): NuRoots, Birthright, and One Table. The websites for Jew Belong and PJ Library scored just under 5. All of these websites were extremely inviting to a new visitor. Most used clean, white backgrounds with black text and large photos. Color was used intelligently, such as PJ Library's use of bright blue, pink, and green to match colors commonly used for children's toys and apparel. One Table utilized a mostly black and white palette, balanced with large images and use of their logo's dark red color to note links or emphasis.

There were a few websites that scored lower on the scale for aesthetics. Often this was due to a cluttered homepage, filled with small, difficult-to-view images, an extensive use of text, and navigation that was difficult to understand.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Visible social media links

To draw visitors to additional information about an organization, it is useful to offer easy access to social media profiles. Every organization analyzed had one or more links to their social media accounts somewhere on the homepage. On average, each organization had three social media accounts. A handful of organizations had four accounts, and three organizations had two accounts. Only one organization, Chai Village, had only one account, but this was not surprising considering that the population the organization serves uses social media less frequently than younger generations. It should be noted that often social media icons are placed on the bottom of the page. If the page requires extensive scrolling, social media becomes even more difficult to find. Keeping social media high on the page is best.

“About” section

“About” sections on the analyzed websites varied broadly, but there were some common threads. On average, this section relies more heavily on text. The average number of paragraphs used on the “About” page was almost eight. While a few organizations included only one or two paragraphs, others included 15 or 16. Many organizations describe their founding years, and almost all incorporated their mission statement into this section. Some organizations chose to use a separate sub-navigation for the mission statement, while others incorporated it into the main “About” page by bolding it or highlighting it in some way so that it stood out from the rest of the page. Several organizations also included staff bios in this section.

Messaging in the “About” section

The about section stood out as an easy opportunity for organizations to share their personalities with visitors and target their desired audiences. Many organizations incorporated missions, visions, founding stories, and history in these sections. Although a few websites’ copy

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

was dry and didn't seem to be written with the audience in mind, most organizations used the "About" sections as an opportunity to speak to their audience.

IKAR, for example, used the line "Fusing piety and hutzpah, tradition and imagination, activism and spiritual practice, IKAR seeks to reclaim the essence (the *ikar*) of Judaism and to help redefine what it means to be Jewish today" ("About," 2015). The line intends to draw visitors with similar values of spirituality and activism.

Responsiveness

Responsive websites – those that change functionality depending on what type of device a visitor uses (computer, tablet, phone) – is vital for website development in a society where 40% web traffic comes from mobile devices (Kaushik, 2009). Research shows that visitors are more likely to close a site if it isn't user-friendly on their phones. Analysis revealed that over 80% of the websites were responsive. Only three sites analyzed had not created a responsive website that could be adapted for mobile views.

Word-of-mouth

Why WOM is useful

Many organizations we met with shared that word-of-mouth has been an essential part of their engagement strategy. Lisa Motenko of The Kitchen explained that much of the organization's growth can be traced back to WOM. She said, "Some people come to us because they see the website, but most people rave about The Kitchen... Word gets around and people are intrigued that their friends are raving about it... 20-30 people are new every single week [at Shabbat]" (September 22, 2016).

Berman of Urban Adamah said he realizes the power of WOM to grow participant numbers. He noted that many participants "go through friends that have found the organization"

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

and that around 50 percent of the attendees at a Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat are invited by friends (September 20, 2016).

Most Chai Village participants learn about the organization “through... the friendship network” (Servi, October 21, 2016). Pullan, a Chai Village participant and communication committee member said, “Several people approach me at the synagogue and say ‘Terry I need to learn more about The Village’ or ‘I need to get more involved in The Village’” (October 21, 2016).

Matthew Weintraub explained that, in order for WOM to work, participants have to be excited enough to share information about the organization with friends. “When people have a positive experience, they share that with their friends and family members and the broader community, and that’s a huge piece of how people find IKAR.” (October 28, 2016). Camp Inc. has seen the same process. Pierce said, “In the end it’s, did they have a really good time... did they see value in it... Mom just can’t stop talking about it because she sees so many outcomes in her child, and then they’re spreading the word for you” (October 20, 2016). Wisch also said that over 40 percent of PJ Library participants come through WOM (September 23, 2016).

Tactical application of WOM marketing

As noted in the Literature Review, marketing through WOM is a useful tool organizations can use to strategize how participants talk about the organization. WOM can be organic, but we found that many of the organizations interviewed used a more tactical approach.

Dr. Lasker at Pico Union Project said the staff study Facebook to determine who the best “connectors” are. He said:

“We’re trying to be much more strategic in saying... ‘Who are our best ambassadors to be excited about this thing? Who can contact their networks?’”

- Dr. Zachary Lasker (September 23, 2016)

Similar to Dr. Lasker's "connectors," PJ Library and Camp Inc. have developed formalized ambassador programs, where people in certain geographic areas have been chosen to spread the word about each organization (Wisch, September 23, 2016; Pierce, October 20, 2016).

On top of ambassador programs, Pierce deploys a number of WOM strategies at Camp Inc. He noted that WOM is encouraged by "incentivizing parents and campers to spread the word for you." To that end, he has started an incentive program that gives students a \$500 refer-a-friend check for every person they speak to who registers for camp. Camp Inc. distributed business cards to the campers so that, when they spoke with someone, they would have a professional card to hand them to prove that they helped usher the new person in (Pierce, October 20, 2016).

Pierce has invited campers to speak at Jewish Community Center open houses to share their experiences with potential campers as well as spreading the word through counselors. The camp invites counselors to work during the school year part-time to spread the word at various events and programs. If a group of campers lives in a certain city, Pierce and his staff will visit and set up parlor meetings in the campers' homes so that they can introduce friends to Camp Inc. (October 20, 2016).

PJ Library has similar programs. Because of the success they have with WOM, the organization started a national refer-a-friend campaign. The campaign successfully motivated current participants to share the monthly benefit of free, Jewish books with friends and family (Wisch, September 23, 2016). Wisch also explained that PJ Libraries in different cities will encourage WOM by hiring someone to create intimate communities within their neighborhood. Those people will reach out to neighbors and set up small, locally organized events like story

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

time in someone's home to get the word out about PJ Library (September 23, 2016).

Challenges of WOM

A few organizations do not use WOM as a strategy they implemented on an organizational level. Benarie of Moishe House noted that, WOM is practical for engaging friends of participants, but the organization would not ask residents to “go and find strangers to come to the houses” (September 2, 2016). However, Moishe House still relies on its residents to share information about their houses with their connections. Fertel Weinstein notes that, when Birthright Israel was founded 16 years ago WOM was spread through institutions like synagogues and Hillels, rather than participants. She added, “That’s not how people communicate now” (November 18, 2016). While most of Birthright Israel’s WOM practices have shifted to social media and online marketing, the foundation of the tactic is still one person sharing information with their peer group.

Print marketing

While it may be true that each of the organizations we spoke with use print marketing in some way, none of the organizations use print materials for every program, project, or announcement. Fertel Weinstein noted that, “Sixteen years ago, it was through... print media” (November 18, 2016), but now much of Birthright Israel’s marketing happens online. The organizational staff we interviewed use print materials for specific purposes.

When print is a good idea

Sometimes, print materials are important to an organization’s target market. Chai Village caters to adults in their sixties, seventies, and eighties who might prefer print to online. Because of this, Chai Village developed a physical packet with information to disseminate to participants (Servi, October 21, 2016).

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Moishe House staffer Benarie said the organization produces postcards with their retreat calendar (September 2, 2016). Urban Adamah sent postcards directly to their preschool-aged campers. “It’s a very kid-friendly postcard,” said Founder Adam Berman (September 20, 2016). Similarly, NuRoots hosts two city-wide festivals each year and produces a variety of print marketing materials. However, she added that the “collateral [printed marketing materials] is more for our community partners.... These are other Jewish organizations we work with. They are part of our festivals as well” (November 17, 2016).

Many of the organizations we spoke with use printed materials when they were out in the community and wanted to offer something to interested parties. When Sinai Temple staff go out into the community, they bring print materials with them. Rabbi Fruithandler said, “We saw one family who used to be connected that wasn’t that took a card and said, ‘Oh, maybe I’ll come back in’” (September 29, 2016). Moishe House’s Benarie explained, “We have folders... Primarily that’s a donor engagement tool” (September 2, 2016). Moishe House staff generally engage with their donors out of the office, so a physical folder is an easy marketing tool on the road. Pierce uses a similar method for Camp Inc. at fairs, “where you’ve got a booth and 20 other camps have a booth and people are coming and collecting stuff and talking to you. So we’ve got little two-sided die-cut flyers that look like the light bulb shape from our logo.” He also sends print materials to camp ambassadors so that they can post flyers about Camp Inc. in their community (October 20, 2016).

What participants think about print

Tal Benisty, a participant at The Kitchen, appreciated the print materials laid out at services, including the siddur made by the organization and a frequently-asked-questions flyer at the entrance. He said, “It was really well designed... there was nice typography.” When asked if

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

he received physical mail from The Kitchen, Benisty said he didn't and had mixed emotions about whether he would want to. He said:

I wouldn't wish upon anybody to send me physical mail because... the odds of actually losing a relevant piece of snail mail in the stack is pretty high... I wouldn't want to be one of those other seventeen pieces of crap that I get... That being said... when you do get something very nice and meaningful in the snail mail, it is actually very nice... I would reserve it for a special thing, like a yearly thank you or, actually I would like it even more if what I got in the mail was unconventional... Instead of sending me just some sort of letter... if I got something physical, like an object or just something a little more clever or something useful (November 4, 2016).

After making this suggestion, Benisty brainstormed what an "unconventional" piece of mail would look like. He suggested a "funny, cheeky manual for building a sukkah." He noted that generally, synagogue mailers with board announcements and ads were more cluttered than useful and likened them to "grey goo," or a mailing that does nothing for him personally (November 4, 2016).

Email marketing

Importance of the weekly newsletter

Every organization we interviewed uses email as a way to communicate. Many organizations provided strong examples of how the e-newsletter is another step in getting their message out. For example, Rabbi Fruithandler shared that, after one-on-one meetings, the most important marketing Atid develops is the weekly email:

"Whenever we ask 'Where'd you find it?' a huge percentage say, 'From the weekly newsletter.'"

- Rabbi Jason Fruithandler (September 29, 2016)

Lodmer from NuRoots echoed the importance of sending out a weekly newsletter. He said:

A great way to reach people is with the newsletter. We highlight individuals from different pockets, and we spotlight some interesting person who gives their picks of the best things in the city. We promote upcoming events and what's going on in the area to

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

further cultivate community and highlight the cool stuff... (September 30, 2016).

Hoffa underlined the different audiences that receive the weekly email from IKAR. This list “includes all of our members, stakeholders, friends of Ikar, people in other countries who are friends of Ikar but are not physically here” (October 28, 2016). This example demonstrates how a weekly newsletter can reach a larger audience than just the immediate community the organization serves.

Several organizations have also considered weekly newsletters with explicit content to target separate audiences. For example, Devorah Servi of Chai Village explained, “We do a newsletter weekly... two newsy ones and two events ones [each month]” (October 21, 2016). Servi explained that some participants receive only news-based emails, some receive only events-based emails, and some have opted for both.

Rabbi Fruithandler spoke to the importance of consistency with email marketing. He said that Atid sends out e-news every two weeks, and if they increase that number, they have unsubscribers. “There’s an email that goes out and it’s just basically a calendar of the week... Once in a while, we’ll send a standalone email blast about a specific thing, and every time we’ll get a couple of unsubscribes,” he said (September 29, 2016).

PJ Library, on the other hand, has “a monthly newsletter that goes to parents... designed by us and then customized by each local community to send out to their families, which... links to resources that can help them enrich their Jewish connection at home” (Wisch, September 23, 2016).

One participant shared his views on how frequently an organization should send out e-newsletters. Benisty examined the frequency of The Kitchen’s emails:

[I receive a newsletter] maybe once every few weeks, but it always tells me if something’s happening... I feel like it’s got a good rhythm of how often to email. The

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

newsletter... keeps [events] on my radar.... I feel pretty informed by the newsletter.
(November 4, 2016)

Another discovery was provided by Birthright Israel. Fertel Weinstein elaborated on the intentionality of the Birthright Israel Newsletter. She explained that the emails serve as an opportunity to educate past participants about news in Israel, as well as ways to get involved with Israel in their home cities (November 18, 2016).

While these organizations detailed the importance of sending e-newsletters, Pierce elaborated on the importance of understanding email analytics. He shared that Camp Inc. receives a “decent open rate [the number of people who open an email based on the total number sent that email] for a blast to the parents and just general stakeholders through our MailChimp e-blast campaign” (October 20, 2016). Their high open rate reinforces the importance of sending out an e-news blast.

What the newsletter can't do

Email marketing does have some limitations. Benarie of Moishe House explained that just because participants received a newsletter does not mean they are actively engaging with the organization (September 2, 2016). Often, participants may never open the newsletter, or, if they do, they may choose not to connect with the organization further.

Some e-newsletters might even get lost in cyberspace and never reach their intended audience. Rabbi Fruithandler shared an example from Atid:

One time we [sent out an e-newsletter] two or three times in two weeks and... AOL or Google... marked us as spam, and no one could get any of our emails from anyone in the building.... So we're really careful about it, it doesn't mean we don't do it, but it's hard.
(September 29, 2016)

While parents and stakeholders generally read emails from Camp Inc., Pierce noted, “You know the campers don't check their email.” Therefore, he leans on other communication

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

platforms to communicate with his campers. For example, “An Instagram post helped Camp Inc. in a way email didn’t. After seeing it, kids were asking parents to register them for camp, even after we had sent emails and made many calls that got ignored” (October 20, 2016).

Social media

Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2004 to connect college students; however, he ended up connecting the entire world (Wadhwa, 2014). Inadvertently, the development of Facebook also created a global platform for businesses and nonprofits. Due to this fact, Jewish nonprofit organizations should pay special attention to the array of social media platforms their audience uses. From Facebook to Twitter, Instagram to Pinterest, YouTube to Vimeo, social media has the ability to help bolster an organization’s brand, as well the niche community that it represents.

We found that every organization interviewed used social media in some way. Many respondents shared how they have adapted to the rise of social media, determined “best practices,” and defined some of the challenges that social media has created for their organizations.

Birthright Israel was one example of an organization that existed before the world of Facebook. As a result, Fertel Weinstein explained how the international organization adapted to the platforms. She said, “There’s a tremendous effort on Facebook and Instagram and Snapchat and even as far as JSwipe, the dating app” (November 18, 2016).

At Camp Inc., which was established after the birth of Facebook, social media helps connect the organization with both campers and their parents. Pierce explained, “They [campers] are on social media. They’re talking back and forth with us on Snapchat everyday.” He also emphasized that Instagram and YouTube videos are examples of what “works really well for the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

campers.” On the other hand, Pierce specified that Facebook posts are actually intended for parents, as they use the medium more than their children (October 20, 2016). This practice helps showcase how a targeted audience can shift depending on the social media platform.

Other organizations shared how essential it is to keep up with the new features on each platform. For instance, Jonathan Eisen, Director of Community Expansion for One Table, shared how he is “fascinated by Facebook Live,” a new offering on Facebook where users can stream themselves live for friends and followers to interact in real time. He explained that, while he hasn’t determined how One Table might use Facebook Live, “I think if you can have the right combination of personality and storytelling, then it can really be an interesting platform for organizations to do more” (December 14, 2016).

How to use it

We observed that harnessing social media results in known and unknown advantages for each nonprofit. One benefit is the ability to attract new participants. Boschan of Moishe House explained that residents and participants are posting on social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, which broadens the number of people that Moishe House can reach. This reach allows for prospective participants who otherwise might not have discovered Moishe House to learn about the program and offerings (September 30, 2016).

Fertel Weinstein explained that Birthright uses targeted marketing in its social media practices by seeking out prospective participants based on terms and phrases in their profiles that relate to Birthright Israel. The organization’s social media plan is tactical, as Fertel Weinstein explained, “It’s really targeted down to keywords in people’s profiles, keywords of things that people might be engaged in, pages they might like, people they might be connected to.” Additionally, due to the analytics features on some social media platforms, Fertel Weinstein can

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

make necessary adjustments to “really try to find people, and in doing so, once you find them, it's about what you do with them” (November 18, 2016). Once Birthright Israel hones in on prospective participants, the staff reach out through targeted advertising, for example.

Fertel Weinstein has a solid understanding of targeting prospective participants online because the organization had a marketing firm help Birthright develop a social media plan. She said:

Before that, we didn't have a marketing firm, there was one person in Israel who managed events and big things and there was somebody who did posts on our Facebook page and Pinterest page, and that was it... We realized that there was an enormous market out there that we needed to speak to, and partnering with people to help bring that to life was game changing. (November 18, 2016)

Similarly, Rabbi Fruithandler of Sinai Temple embraced some of the social media marketing tactics from Darim Online (www.darimonline.org), a Jewish nonprofit that specializes in social media. From the organization, Rabbi Fruithandler learned “that for social media, you need to do fourteen meaningful, interesting, funny, or informational posts to get to the one event advertisement you want. That should be your ratio” (September 29, 2016). While this 14:1 ratio has not been researched formally outside of Darim, the concept is not to inundate an audience with ads, but to scatter them in with meaningful, shareable nuggets of engagement to keep an audience interested. Rabbi Fruithandler shared that this projected ratio is not realistic for his organization, but he would “like to see ourselves head in that direction” (September 29, 2016).

Making it your own

Ultimately, Jewish nonprofit organizations expressed how imperative it is to make social media their own. Hoffa of IKAR shared, “It's a lot easier to have a distinct style on social media” than other forms of marketing such as print. As a community deeply committed to social justice, the organization “posts pieces of inspiration, maybe sermons and really awesome IKAR

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

moments that will appeal to people all over the world.” In addition to their official IKAR Facebook page, the organization created group pages for their segmented audiences, in order to “cater to the specific needs of those groups” (October 28, 2016).

For some of the larger, national, or international organizations we observed, local branches created their own unique social media pages and accounts associated with the organization. Benarie of Moishe House noted that every house had a Facebook page to post their specific chapter events. While each house has autonomy, the organization gives information about best practices. Additionally, Director of Marketing and Communication Boschan, who currently oversees all of Moishe House’s social media, acts as an additional resource for the houses. Benarie noted, “If a house was not doing well... we would do some individual reach outs, maybe go through Facebook and see who are the people... that you haven’t seen in a while and maybe reach out to them” (September 2, 2016). Similarly, Wisch of PJ Library said, “We have our Facebook page with active posts that go to parents,” but also utilize smaller, more specified social media options, like “a closed Facebook group for PJ Power Hour.” The group, which is run by parent volunteers, creates more intimate PJ Library events in specific communities through the use of Facebook (September 23, 2016).

Pierce of Camp Inc. emphasized that he adds fresh content to social media accounts as often as possible. He explained, “You’ve got to be on it every day.” He noted that many posts are targeted just to campers and can seem like “nonsense, but it’s always things that these teens want to share and they want to repost,” and is one way that the organization keeps campers engaged. For instance, the camp posts blog contests and encourages campers to post pictures on Instagram wearing their Camp Inc. hoodie (October 20, 2016).

Another way the organization gets its name out is by connecting with social media

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

influencers and encouraging them to post about Camp Inc. (October 20, 2016). One example is a well known figure from the reality television show, “Shark Tank.” Pierce said:

She's mentioned us a couple times, and she's said, 'Yeah, write me a couple of tweets and I'll send them out, but I'm busy.' I'll write a tweet and email it to her and she'll send it out. And then we get some hits on the site, and our analytics go up, but you know I don't know that it's like direct conversion of people saying 'Oh I've never heard of this before she mentioned it.' (October 20, 2016)

Still, Pierce continues to reach out to Jewish entrepreneurs with large numbers of social media followers with the dream of a tweet from Mark Zuckerberg (October 20, 2016).

The struggle is real

Some organizations discussed the challenges they have faced on social media. For example, Eisen of One Table shared, “We’re on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat. In my opinion I don’t know which is really working for us.” He explained how the nonprofit’s Communication Manager role is being “managed by different people right now,” which adds to the confusion, but he acknowledges that Facebook seems to be one platform that works well for One Table (December 14, 2016).

The Kitchen doesn’t have a strong social media presence because it hasn’t been a priority for the organization. Motenko shared, “it’s something we’re trying to work on a little bit, so we try to come with a schedule for staff to make sure to post one article at this time every week” (September 22, 2016). Similarly, Chai Village has a limited social media presence. While they do have a Facebook page, Devorah Servi admitted that they don’t use it often (October 21, 2016). Susan Levine and Andrea Pullan, participants of Chai Village, mentioned, “We’re not doing any other social media because our population doesn’t really – we’re not tweeting... and Snapchatting... and we’re not on Pinterest. I mean, that’s not our population” (October 21, 2016).

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Participants notice when an organization's social media isn't running smoothly. Benisty shared, "The [Kitchen] Facebook group is a little bit of a mess, so... I don't really pay attention to it" (November 4, 2016). Rabbi Fruithandler agreed, saying, "Facebook has become too super-saturated, that people don't want to get their news or their event information from there" (September 29, 2016).

Green of NuRoots explained that she doesn't use social media, but that some of her colleagues do. She noted that prospective participants who reach out on social media alone often don't follow up with NuRoots staff who respond to their inquiries (November 17, 2016).

Social media content analysis

We analyzed the main social media accounts associated with the 17 organizations. Of the six platforms analyzed, the average number of social media platforms used by an organization was three.

While all of the organizations utilize social media as a way to engage previously disengaged Jews, we observed that some organizations are "doing" social media better than others.

Facebook

While the analyses revealed that every organization has a Facebook page (see Table 3), not every organization was active in posting on the page. A more active page correlated with a larger following. For example, local organizations with an active Facebook page averaged around the same number of followers as other local organizations. Similarly, two national organizations, Bend the Arc and PJ Library, and one international organization, Birthright Israel, had extremely large numbers of followers. This included a corresponding number of likes, better overall ratings, and approving reviews.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

However, the analyses highlighted a few situational discrepancies. For example, one organization researched, Chai Village LA, a growing community geared towards an older demographic, hasn't utilized Facebook as a main approach to reaching participants. Despite the fact that the Facebook page is in its nascent stage and has a small number of followers, it is noteworthy that the organization chose to activate an account regardless of its primary demographic.

Organization	FB Followers	FB Likes	FB Stars	FB reviewers
Atid @ Sinai Temple	2960	3,042	4.3	29
Be'chol Lashon	3923	4,047		
Bend the Arc	23440	23,915		
Birthright Israel	360784	374,821		
Camp Inc.	929	971	5	3
Chai Village	51	52	5	1
IKAR	2931	2,995	5	25
JewBelong	1189	1,195		
Maccabi at the JCC	8993	9,417		
Moishe House	5742	5,932	5	6
NuRoots	233	227		
One Table	6649	6,698		
P.J. Library	22406	22,551		
Pico Union Project	2170	2,248	4.7	30
Reboot	1649	1,688		
The Kitchen	1250	1275	4.9	10
Urban Adamah	3682	3,747	2.4	
Mean	26410.65	27342.41	4.54	14.86

Table 3. Facebook Content Analysis

Twitter

All but three organizations had a Twitter account. The average number of followers on Twitter was 3598.93, but that included an outlier, Birthright Israel, with 19,400 followers. Once

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

we removed this outlier, the average number of followers on Twitter was 2383.46.

The average number of tweets was 2041.14, but that included an outlier, Bend the Arc, with 6,278 tweets. Once we removed that outlier, the average number of tweets was 1715.23.

Instagram

Ten of the seventeen organizations researched had an active Instagram account. The average number of followers on Instagram was 4,625, but that included an outlier, Birthright Israel, with 38,100 followers. Once we removed this outlier, the average number of followers on Instagram was 905.

The average number of Instagram posts was 294, but that included an outlier, Birthright Israel, with 765 posts. Once we removed this outlier, the average number of posts on Instagram was 235.13.

Pinterest

Only one of the seventeen organizations researched had an active Pinterest account. The organization, One Table, created a platform designed to help people host or attend a Shabbat meal. In an effort to inspire Shabbat goers, the organization utilized Pinterest as a way to educate hosts and attendees on how to prepare for a Shabbat meal. The One Table Pinterest profile includes the following tagline: “Want to have a relaxing, fun, seamless and of course meaningful Shabbat Dinner? We've got your back. Recipes, table inspo, and hosting 101.” One Table uses Pinterest to target an audience that might not be as comfortable hosting Shabbat or preparing meals. For example, One Table organized its Pinterest account with clever and catchy board titles to attract these types of participants. One board entitled “New cook? No probz,” aims to provide Shabbat appropriate recipes to inexperienced cooks (2017).

YouTube and Vimeo

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About half of the organizations researched had an active YouTube or Vimeo account. The average number of subscribers on these video-streaming accounts was 509, but that included an outlier, Moishe House, with 1,272 subscribers. Once we removed this outlier, the average number of subscribers was 413.

The average number of videos posted on these accounts was 48.89, but that included an outlier of 131 (Birthright Israel) and 132 (Camp Inc.) videos posted. Once we removed those outliers, the average number of videos posted was 25.29.

The average number of video views was 443,482, but that included Birthright Israel, an outlier with 3,239,448 views. Once we removed that outlier, the average number of video views was 93,986.

Messaging in social media

We analyzed how an organization distinctively used targeted messaging on each social media by analyzing the key words and phrases used throughout these channels and how an organization used their own unique voice to reach participants and prospects. Each of the organizations we observed used social media for this purpose, and targeted messaging was clear across most channels. Below are specific examples of social media done well.

Pico Union Project, an emerging multi-faith cultural arts center and house of worship, posted on Facebook on January 15, 2016 the following:

FARMER'S MARKET @ PICO UNION! Last week we launched our new bi-weekly Farmer's Market at the Pico Union Project. We're working with Seeds of Hope and Food Forward to give out free, fresh produce to our neighbors. Over time we'll be adding healthful cooking demonstrations, art classes for kids, an array of health services for families, yoga, community beautification projects and more. #loveyourneighbor.

Below the post, the organization tagged four pictures of some of the produce that was harvested by Pico Union Project, as well as a flyer for the upcoming cooking demonstrations.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

We saw this post as an effective way to convey the niche, multi-faith community they represent. Additionally, this post named a partnering organization that could serve as another draw to a disengaged participant.

IKAR has an active Twitter account. On average, the organization tweets twice a week about happenings within the IKAR community and re-tweets articles from other mission-aligned organizations. On September 13, 2016, the organization tweeted the following: “Talk about radical welcoming. Pure awesomeness.” Below the tweet was a link to an article entitled, “Teen Makes ‘Sit With Us’ App That Helps Students Find Lunch Buddies.” The tweet further demonstrated how “radical welcoming” is a core value for the organization and how the organization targets a like-minded audience.

Birthright Israel has grown its twitter account to 38,100 followers. Not only does this international organization have the largest following, but every picture posted evokes an idyllic journey in Israel. From wearing Israeli flags at sunset to mouthwatering images of shawarma, the @birthrightisrael handle has received hundreds, if not thousands of likes with each post.

While all of the posts could be seen as engagement strategies, we were particularly intrigued by the number of “Birthright marriages” Instagram posts. For example, @birthrightisrael posted the following picture (<https://www.instagram.com/p/BOGAKE7Bqxl/>) with this caption below:

birthrightisrael: When Marlyse went on a Birthright Israel trip with her sister, she didn't expect to meet some of her best friends and her future husband. Marlyse met Adam when he was behind her in line as they were checking in for their flight. ‘He’s tall, handsome, and so goofy. I was instantly smitten,’ she remembers. ‘We fell in love with Israel as our own love story was unfolding. Spending two weeks together without the distraction of the outside world is a gift not often afforded adults with jobs and responsibilities. Once we got back into the rhythm of our daily lives we enjoyed the time to get to know each other in the regular world.’ After two and a half years of dating, Adam took Marlyse to the top of the U.S. Bank Tower with the pretense that they were going to watch his best friend Frank film a commercial. But really, it was an elaborate filmed proposal followed by a

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

surprise engagement party with family and friends. ❤️ #Birthright @marzbarzcarz.

This post highlights not only that Birthright Israel is an opportunity to visit the Jewish homeland, but that the relationships that are formed on the trip can be life-lasting. These posts about Birthright marriages target prospective participants who are single and hope to meet a spouse or partner, suggesting that this is possible on the organization's trip.

We had a difficult time deciding upon a specific YouTube or Vimeo video that articulated a strong targeted message because the videos varied in content, length, and purpose. However, one noteworthy example of a YouTube video was posted by JCC Maccabi. The organized sports program for Jewish teens posted a two-and-a-half minute-long promotional video entitled, "JCC Maccabi ArtsFest: This Summer. One Week. Your Moment to Shine." This video specifically highlighted the week-long arts track, which captured kids dancing and singing, as well as narratives of some of the participants from the program. One kid shared how his experience allowed him to "meet cool people" and another kid talked about her experience as an Israeli participant. Aside from the rich content, the video was viewed over thirteen-hundred times and can be seen as a prime example for how teen narratives can speak to and reach other teens around the world.

External marketing

Many of the organizations interviewed use external marketing practices to engage with their target audience.

Press coverage

Benarie of Moishe House explained how print marketing has helped them reach members. She said, "We just had this article in the Jewish Journal about the new Downtown LA House, something... worked on primarily to get the attention of donors. Did it probably get the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

attention of some community members? Sure” (September 2, 2016).

Advertising in magazines

When we interviewed Fertel Weinstein, she shared that Birthright Israel purchased ad buy in Rolling Stones magazine 16 years ago. She explained that the year they bought the ad was the first year of Birthright Israel and “they only took about 9000 participants...and we’ve come a long way from some ads in Rolling Stone, which are still really cool to look at.” Nowadays, Birthright Israel focuses not on magazines, but on advertising in college campus bus shelters, for example, as well as other external marketing platforms (November 18, 2016).

Online marketing

Berman of Urban Adamah explained that the organization advertises online both inside and outside of the Jewish community. He said that Urban Adamah posts on “30 different websites and listservs that are out in the world that speak to people who are interested in farming, social justice, or progressive Judaism” (September 20, 2016). One participant shared:

“I found Urban Adamah in a weird way. I found them on an unexpected website, some website called www.backdoorjobs.com where I was looking. I was looking for opportunities to travel, and Urban Adamah was one of the options... and I went to their website... I actually thought there was a catch. I was like this can’t be real, this sounds wrong and impossible” (October 27, 2016).

This example highlights how some organizations accessed other available resources to get their information out to the broader community.

When not to use it

Moishe House discussed two reasons why they don’t use external marketing often. Boschan explained that the organization doesn’t spend resources on television or newspaper

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

advertising. Instead, press is produced more organically, when reporters who are connected with residents share their stories (September 30, 2016). Additionally, Benarie of Moishe House elaborated, “We don’t do a lot of fishing for people. That’s never been Moishe House’s jam.” She explained that the organization responds to demand, rather than trying to drive it (September 2, 2016).

Pierce of Camp Inc. explained why he didn’t want to spend money on digital marketing. He felt it was challenging to create search engine optimization by buying the right keywords for a Jewish business teen camp. He explained that, because the camp is so specialized, very few people would search online for a Jewish business camp. “They are searching ‘Jewish camp’ and a business one comes up and that’s when they go, ‘Well, I guess my kid might like that’” (October 20, 2016). Because of this, it is difficult for the organization to purchase keywords on Google that might affect where Camp Inc. is listed in search results, so Peirce avoids the market altogether.

Analytics

Are analytics important?

Analytics, the process of tracking data, analyzing patterns, and using the analysis to inform decisions (Cohen, 2016), was another common conversation topic brought up in our interviews. Every organization had a different way of tracking data, and some did it better than others, but everyone admitted that it was important to keep track of some data in order to achieve measurable goals. When discussing Atid and Sinai Temple, Rabbi Fruithandler said, “We have been keeping... progressively better and better data and that is important for us to look at” (September 29, 2016). Fertel Weinstein added that Birthright Israel doesn’t record simple surface data like “being at my synagogue or... wearing a Birthright sweatshirt somewhere.” Instead, she

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

said that the data must be richer, asking young adults how a trip changed them long-term (November 18, 2016). Green noted that qualitative measurements are just as important as quantitative ones, as they allow her and other staff to explain the organization through storytelling and narrative (November 17, 2016).

Metrics by the numbers

To understand more complex data, the organizations know some surface data is required. Keeping track of participants is vital for many of these organizations to measure success. Berman of Urban Adamah explained, “We have numbers that we try to achieve every year – a certain number of fellows, a certain number of campers, a certain number of people that participate in our Kabbalat Shabbat or *havdalot* programs on the farm.” He added that, aside from numbers, the staff also ask participants to evaluate each program to see if their experiences matched the goals set up by the staff (September 20, 2016). NuRoots uses similar metrics. Green noted that the organization tracks, “how many people we have coffee dates with, how many people come to our experiences and events, how many people we’re able to connect with other individuals or organizations.” (November 17, 2016).

Moishe House also tracks participation. Benarie said, “We have two different metrics that we track. One is total attendance and one is first timers this year.” Using these totals, Moishe House is able to determine how many unique participants attended their events and the average number of events attended per unique participant. The organization has annual goals such as “the number of people we want to be reached worldwide by MHWOW [Moishe House Without Walls], by houses, by learning retreats...” Benarie explained that the organization also has individual goals for participants. For MHWOW, for example, they consider hosts engaged if they have held two programs at their home in the past year (September 2, 2016). Each of these

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

numeric figures helps the organizations measure how they're doing at any point in time.

Collecting the data

Each organization has different practices when it comes to collecting data, but all organizations used some method, and many enlist the support of technology. Several organizations mentioned that their database system is an integral part of data recording. Chai Village uses the software Club Express, which tracks participation, service requests, volunteer hours, and more (Servi, October 21, 2016). Although Rabbi Fruithandler mentioned that it has pros and cons, Sinai Temple employs Black Bod's Razor's Edge system, which allows them to explore membership numbers and subcategories (September 29, 2016). Moishe House developed their own proprietary database system called the Moishe House Intranet, or "Mintranet," to track data (September 2, 2016).

Chai Village, Urban Adamah, and The Kitchen use sign-up sheets at various events to track attendance and sign up prospective participants. They put the sheets at the door or pass them around to collect contact information from people who may not be in their databases or who may not have registered for an event online. Chai Village staff do not utilize online registration, and physical sign-in sheets are its main source of data collection at events (Servi, October 21, 2016).

For larger-scale projects, program improvements, or major changes some of the organizations rely on extensive research. For example, before revamping their website, Birthright Israel conducted a series of focus groups to gain feedback (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016).

Evaluations

Many of the organizations we interviewed conducted large-scale evaluations, either

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

developed and implemented internally or outsourced to an external organization. Wisch informed us that PJ Library produces an internal evaluation every three years. She said:

“We work hard to craft questions that give us a window into families... One question is, ‘Have you strengthened or added a Jewish ritual... in your home life?’... 58% of the people said yes.”

– Judi Wisch (September 23, 2016)

Moishe House utilizes external evaluation. In the study, staff want to see how participants engage with Moishe House as well as how engagement in the Jewish community shifts based on that participation (Benarie, September 2, 2016). Camp Inc. participates in the Foundation for Jewish Camp’s Camper Satisfaction Insights survey. Pierce explained that the survey asks campers about the Jewish values and knowledge they gained, whether camp gave them a greater appreciation of Shabbat and whether their families’ Jewish involvement increases after the child(ren) attend camp (October 20, 2016). NuRoots also uses an independent organization for evaluation (Green, November 17, 2016).

Since its inception, Birthright Israel has produced a similar study developed in partnership with the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016). The longitudinal study collected data from participants who attended the first round of trips in 2000 and asks questions such as:

What is their engagement in synagogue life? Did they decide to marry someone Jewish? Did they decide it was important to raise their children Jewish? ... Have they returned to Israel? Have they gotten involved with any activities on campus? How has that changed their course direction? (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016)

Challenges

Analytics are a powerful tool, but sometimes complications can arise. The organizations we interviewed shared some of the issues they face in trying to analyze data. At times, the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

hardest step for some of the organizations was determining how to track data from the beginning. Dr. Lasker explained that he is still in the process of developing a protocol for analytics. The organization currently sends a questionnaire to ask how participants found Pico Union Project and requests feedback for certain programs (September 23, 2016).

Rabbi Fruithandler noted some of the difficulties of trying to track such a large number of participants at Sinai Temple and Atid. He said, “There is no one with a master spreadsheet somewhere who is checking all of the 1700 or so membership units and how often they're attending and what events they're attending” (September 29, 2016). Green shared a similar challenge for NuRoots. Because the organization focuses on community building, “there are relationships that form that you don't even know about... It's a joy, but on the other hand, that is a challenge for how you measure this and how you track it...” (November 17, 2016). Rabbi Fruithandler also explained that the lay leaders interest in the data is varied and inconsistent, which can present an obstacle to effectively using the data for a consistent engagement plan (September 29, 2016).

Opportunities

Just as organizations see challenges in analytics, others are finding unique new opportunities to gain an even better sense of the data. Birthright Israel is in the process of creating an app for participants who have returned from their trips. Fertel Weinstein described the app as a concierge service, offering past participants opportunities to connect to the Jewish community in their home city. She expects the app to offer Birthright Israel staff “even more data to really see the ROI [return on investment] and the impact of engagement” (November 18, 2016).

Meeting them where they are

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Finding Jews in Jewish organizations can be simple. Finding Jews outside of Jewish organizations is more difficult. The staff we interviewed find Jews both ways. Connecting with Jews already engaged with Jewish organizations can be viewed as a less complicated process, but the organizations we highlighted are committed to finding Jews outside of Jewish organizations as well. Because of this, they have come up with creative solutions to finding Jews, by reaching out to them in their neighborhood, in their virtual communities online, and more.

Meeting them at other organizations

Many of the staff we interviewed spoke about their collaborations with organizations with similar target audiences. For example, Pierce introduces Camp Inc. at Jewish Community Center open houses. He explained, “We can build a little campfire... we pretend, it's like a campfire song session and we tell stories about each of our camps.” Additionally, Pierce will visit local synagogues, schools, and youth groups to pitch Camp Inc. to prospective campers (October 20, 2016).

PJ Library employs a similar strategy. Wisch shared, “We collaborate in many... communities with local organizations, so it could be this synagogue and PJ Library, this JCC and PJ Library, and maybe one synagogue runs a tea date once a month, and another synagogue... runs a baby lounge.” She also explained that the national program is implemented locally, so there are benefits to partnering with local Jewish organizations. “It’s their job to engage the families, and they do meet a lot of their families” (Wisch, September 23, 2016).

Berman noted that one staff member’s job is to recruit for specific programs for Urban Adamah. He explained, “There is a whole strategy around it, including talking to every Hillel in the country” (September 20, 2016). Birthright Israel also visits college campuses regularly to educate students about the free ten-day trip:

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

On campus we've had tents and virtual reality headsets to see what Israel would look like with giveaways, and hummus and falafel. Bringing Israel to campus to at least get some people who are walking to class to say, 'What is this?' and really bring some new people to take a look." (Fertel Weinstein, November 18, 2016)

Thus, rather than relying solely on word-of-mouth and print marketing – as Birthright Israel did to a certain degree in the nonprofit's inception – now, Fertel Weinstein says finding attendees means meeting them where they are (November 18, 2016).

Meeting them in their hood

The nonprofit staff we interviewed discussed some of the ways they reach out to prospective participants in their own neighborhoods. Each organization elaborated on the different strategies and tactics they use within a pocketed area. For example, Lodmer of NuRoots explained, "We focus on these little micro-communities like Venice and the Westside." He believes that meeting them in their own community is the first step; from there the organizational staff can build and grow the network (September 30, 2016).

His colleague, Green, adds, "Young people in their 20s and 30s are not necessarily seeking out Jewish institutions and brick-and-mortar organizations, they're not going to synagogues." For this reason, Green and the NuRoots staff seek out these individuals by going to them. Benarie of Moishe House also spoke to the importance of creating micro-communities. She said, "Our goal is basically to have houses wherever Jewish young adults are [so] that they can be involved with Moishe House" (September 2, 2016).

Wisch of PJ Library discussed how the organization sends people to targeted locations, including schools and fairs. "Anything that you can do in public space and in Jewish spaces to enroll families [in PJ Library]," she said. In order for families to learn about the PJ Library program the organization seeks out any opportunity that attracts young families (September 23, 2016).

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Another example of meeting them in their “hood” was offered by Rabbi Fruithandler of Sinai Temple. He said, “You gotta be where they are.... We just did an apple and honey tasting at Ralph’s. We bought a bunch of apples and honey and set up a table in the tents and handed out to whoever wanted” (September 29, 2016).

The whole point of intentional communities like Chai Village is to meet people in their “hoods.” Servi stated, “It’s helping people age in place, in their own home wherever that may be within a certain geographic area” (October 21, 2016).

Meeting them where they are online

Two organizations explained how they meet prospective participants online. Berman of Urban Adamah shared his success in engaging prospective fellows by putting “information about the fellowship on probably about 30 different websites and listservs,” both Jewish and non-Jewish sites such as sustainability sites, eco-farming job listings, and more (September 20, 2016).

Fertel Weinstein of Birthright Israel explained how connected their target audience is to the digital world:

In order for us to get people that may have either not known that they were... ‘Jewish enough,’ or lived in a community where they were one of five Jews in town, and they were never exposed to knowing about us, or they’d go to a college that is, had a very small Jewish population that may not even have an active Hillel, so we are able to find them [online] and message them and let them know that a) we exist, and b) that this trip is something that’s for them, just as much as it is for someone like you or me. (November 18, 2016)

Sometimes you can’t meet them online

Chai Village emphasized a reason why an organization might not be able to reach prospective participants online. Servi said, “We have to make phone calls because [some participants] don’t use technology... We also... help those who are not very tech savvy... so

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

they can get to our material online” (October 21, 2016).

Challenges

Several organizations discussed the challenge of trying to meet people where they are.

Rabbi Fruithandler summarized by saying that you cannot force someone to engage with their Judaism if they don't want to. He said:

If I'm not looking to watch documentaries, no matter how many times you show me an advertisement for a documentary, it's unlikely I'm going to click on it and watch it. What's more than that, the competition for everyone's time is so absurd and great... There's meeting them where they are, finding out where Jews are as best as we can, which is not an easy thing to do, but it's possible, and showing up there with a little hook for something else. (September 29, 2016)

Relational Judaism

How an organization both connects with its participants and connects its participants to each other is the cornerstone of relational Judaism (Wolfson, 2013). In his book with the same title, Dr. Ron Wolfson notes organizations that have embraced relational Judaism as a tactic to increase and retain participants. Chabad, for example, deploys rabbis into communities who frequently welcome guests into their homes to share meals and connect. Similarly, Hillels developed the Campus Entrepreneur Initiative, in which students engage other students through peer-to-peer networking (Wolfson, 2013). The use of relational Judaism was extremely evident in all of our conversations, and often fell into three main categories – how relationships are built, the one-on-one “coffee date,” and “radical welcoming,” a term we have lovingly appropriated from the IKAR team, who in turn has borrowed it from Christianity (Brous, 2016).

Many of the staff and participants we interviewed noted that founders, directors, and rabbis at many of the institutions were exceptional at relating to and connecting with participants. Dr. Lasker of Pico Union Project said, “One of [founder] Craig Taubman's amazing strengths is that he's exceptional at being personal with people. He picks up the phone and calls

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

people way more than most people do, and he shoots very personal emails” (September 23, 2016). Tal Benisty, a participant at The Kitchen, said, “I think in a way, Lisa [Motenko] has her own gravitational force... She’s an adorable person, and it’s nice to see her regularly, ... along with Noa [Kushner, Founding Rabbi] and the music and the challah” (November 4, 2016).

Some organizations, like IKAR, create a culture of relationship-building. Matthew Weintraub, Assistant Director, said, “It’s very seriously, it’s very deliberate, it’s relational, it really focuses on trying to connect people both to IKAR and each other, and we would say that is the most important thing that we do that keeps people engaged” (October 28, 2016). Rabbi Fruithandler had a similar sentiment. He explained, “Engagement looks like a group of people who are connected to the synagogue, each other, and us... If we miss one of those, it doesn’t necessarily result in longer-term commitment to Sinai” (September 29, 2016). Benarie explained that Moishe House acts similarly. She said, “If a house was not doing well that might be one of our tactics we recommend...– to do some individual reach outs” (September 2, 2016).

Moishe House and Chai Village staff explained how important it was for their participants to connect with one another. For example, Pullen of Chai Village stated, “These are people who really like being together... and so when one of us is doing something [like going for walks or eating out], we’re encouraging other people to come do it along with us... The good news is we like being with each other” she noted (October 21, 2016). Benarie noted that Moishe House residents and participants, “mostly just become friends. Follow-up is such a corporate word for it I guess, but, pretty much, what usually happens is they become friends and they are friends on Facebook, and then it’s a community” (September 2, 2016).

Value of a coffee date

Coffee dates, or one-on-one meetings between staff and participants, seem second nature

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

to these organizations. Lodmer from NuRoots noted:

Number one is meeting with people and having one-on-one coffees. We ask questions like: Who are you? What are you about? What do you like? What are you missing? What are you yearning for? What really lights your fire? What do you want to explore? What do you want to create? How can we help? (September 30, 2016)

Green of NuRoots noted that the first coffee date is an opportunity to get to know the prospective participant in deep and meaningful ways. When discussing someone's background, Green explained, "It's really finding out what makes them tick." She asks questions like, "What gets you out of bed every morning and makes your heart pitter-patter?... because that really gets to the meat of who someone is and also where they're going to find meaning" (November 17, 2016). These questions are personal, and the conversation is not one that people experience in everyday life, so it is easy to see how these types of coffees connect people on a deeper level. Rabbi Fruithandler echoed these sentiments and explained that Atid's most effective engagement strategy is through one-on-one meetings. He said that he has coffee meetings about twice a month with people interested in Atid and Sinai Temple (September 29, 2016).

Craig Taubman, Founder of Pico Union Project, said that the personal relationships can be, at times, more important than running the organization. He said:

"I get caught in the same trap of measuring success with numbers, but the best moments we have here, the best moments we have in life, are one-on-one, truly intimate relationships."

- Craig Taubman (September 23, 2016)

Participants also see great value in these coffee dates. Benisty said that Motenko reached out and offered to meet him for coffee when he had just learned about The Kitchen. He said, "We had this really cool conversation, and we had a really good connection," and it was an exciting experience for him (November 4, 2016).

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Often, the coffee dates end with the organizational staff making an “ask” of the participant or prospect, some plan for future follow-up. Green noted that NuRoots follow-up may be nontraditional. Rather than requesting that the person donate money or become a member, Green might say, “I want to invite you along to this event or experience we’re creating,” “Can I connect you to [someone], because you guys are both starting to get into Jewish yoga practice?” “You talked a lot about how you have all these friends who are Jewish but don’t do anything, would you be cool with introducing me to some of them?,” or just, “Let’s follow up in the next three or four weeks” (November 17, 2016). She noted that the ask changes based on the conversation.

Green noted some challenges she faces because of the one-on-one nature of her position. She noted that, as of now, she remembers most details of her conversations with NuRoots participants and has developed deep relationships with many of them. As more people connect with NuRoots, however, it becomes more difficult to rely solely on memory. This is when a database system becomes useful. She also reflected on the very personal process each fellow has in shaping their communities. This makes transition difficult. Green said, “People have left, and no one has stepped into that position, so there have been relationships lost for sure. You need the old person to introduce the new people to the neighborhood. And [it’s difficult because] there’s so much trust built.” She suggested the importance of a well designed transition plan.

Radical welcoming

In a May, 2016 sermon, IKAR’s Rabbi Sharon Brous discussed the concept of radical welcoming. She called it, “an opportunity to actually see each other” and to make sure that “no one feels marginalized” (Brous, 2016). Weintraub expanded:

I think what keeps them in the door... is our concept of radical welcoming. We focus a lot of energy and attention to make sure that as soon as someone walks into the room, that

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

someone is acknowledging them and knows who they are. We understand why they're there, we try to connect them with other people who might be similar to them or who can share their experience. We have a great volunteer program where people come... to welcome [and] make sure that everyone who walks through the door has a smiling face and someone to talk to. That's vital to our community. (October 28, 2016)

Several other organizations we spoke with practice radical welcoming without assigning that specific label. At a High Holy Day program, Taubman purposefully sought out the opinion of a man who hadn't previously spoken up (Lasker, September 23, 2016). Dr. Lasker explained, "Craig is really gifted at... building a community within the room. He literally pulls [people] out of the audience and [asks]: What's your story? Why are you here? ... In the middle of a concert, in the middle of a service" (September 23, 2016).

To ensure that they don't miss an opportunity to welcome new participants, Rabbi Fruithandler explained that Sinai Temple will add a smiley face or other symbols to a newbie's nametag. He explained that the symbol is a visual reminder for the entire synagogue to reach out to that person, and is helpful when dealing with such a large group of people (September 29, 2016).

The Kitchen is particularly deliberate in its radical welcoming. Motenko described how they address the fear that when you enter a synagogue, you may not know anyone and feel uncomfortable or isolated: "We're trying to change that [by] saying, 'Hey, we noticed that you came... Welcome to the community. We hope you enjoyed it. We want you to come back...'" she said. To ensure this, Motenko and other staff introduce themselves to new people who come for Shabbat and request that they sign-in using an electronic database system. Then The Kitchen staff follow up with them during dinner after services (September 22, 2016).

Benisty noted that this feeling of welcoming at The Kitchen continues long after newcomer status might end. He said, "Sometimes Lisa emails just the young people of the

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

synagogue and says, ‘Hey, let’s have a picnic for us youngsters,’ or, ‘Let’s go to a concert together’” (November 4, 2016). Of course, this staff outreach might not be possible in larger organizations, and that is one reason why Motenko noted that she doesn’t envision large growth plans for The Kitchen. Instead, the organization hopes to stay intimate so that staff can still connect personally with the participants (September 22, 2016). Susan Levin, a participant and communications committee member at Chai Village, also noted the welcoming she received when joining the organization. She said, “This has been an amazing experience for my husband and for me... It’s such a welcoming organization, and it opens up so many doors for us. This has been... the single best thing that we’ve done in our move [to Los Angeles]” (October 21, 2016).

Newcomer follow-up

“Sometimes we follow up and say, ‘It was great to meet you.’ Sometimes we invite them out for coffee. Sometimes... we say things like, ‘You’re interested in young adult stuff?’ I got a list [of people for that]” (Motenko, September 22, 2016). While Motenko has developed a useful formula for newcomer follow-up at The Kitchen, every Jewish nonprofit professional identified several different ways in which they follow up with newcomers at their organization.

Personal Follow-Up

One tactic often discussed for newcomer follow-up was a personal follow-up approach. For example, Rabbi Fruithandler of Sinai Temple explained that he meets prospective members for coffee regularly (September 29, 2016). Similarly, Servi of Chai Village reaches out to prospective participants who have contacted Chai Village to learn more or have attended a first event. Servi also formed a committee of participants who make phone calls to check in with new participants and prospects (October 21, 2016). We observed that personal follow-up is equally vital in a young adult community as in an intentional community of older adults.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Benisty, a participant of The Kitchen, supported the value of personal follow-up with his own experience. He described an early interaction with the organization after he contacted The Kitchen. He stated, “Lisa [Motenko] actually reached out to me, and she said, ‘Hey, I saw your email. Let’s meet for coffee.’ ... She’s the one who told me there was a picnic” (November 4, 2016).

Following up with technology

One identified approach to follow-up is vis-à-vis technology. Several organizations that work with young adults emphasized the importance of utilizing technology on various platforms. Benarie of Moishe House explained, “We definitely have best practices that we suggest to them, and most of [the residents] ... are pretty good with following up, often by text message or Facebook” (September 2, 2016). Similarly, Lodmer of NuRoots shared:

“The fellows are constantly texting, e-mailing, meeting, and pushing the ball forward.”

- Zack Lodmer (September 30, 2016)

Another approach was provided by Berman of Urban Adamah, who shared his concerted effort in collecting names of new participants. He said, “For all non-Shabbat programs, when people show up at the door for a program, we ask them to fill out a piece of paper, which we send to our database.” He explained that about half of attendees do not register for programs in advance; therefore, he needs to collect names and email addresses in order to send newsletters in the future (September 20, 2016).

Programmatic follow-up

There is also an opportunity for an organization to engage a newcomer with programmatic follow-up. Birthright Israel builds their programmatic follow-up into the design of

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

the Birthright Israel experience. Fertel Weinstein explained, “If you go on a trip, a community trip that is partnered with a local area [Jewish] Federation, there’s pre-trip and post-trip right there on your bus. That’s built into your experience.” (November 18, 2016).

Moishe House is another example of an organization that provides programmatic experiences, such as their learning retreats. Benarie explained, “we encourage residents to send their community members on retreats... they’re all free... so suddenly, not only are they involved in a Jewish community... they’ve gotten training by professionals... to run their own programming out of their own homes” (September 2, 2016).

Recommendations

When Jewish organizations overlook Jews on the fringes, they limit their opportunity for potential growth. Our research revealed how certain Jewish organizations are working hard at engaging Jews, especially those that they define as disengaged Jews. Several main themes stood out as the crux for how the organizations studied build bridges and reach out to disengaged Jews: creating targeted messaging, maintaining visitor-friendly websites, spreading information through WOM, developing a range of marketing avenues from print to email to social media, considering opportunities to collaborate and engage in external marketing, analyzing data, positioning the organization as niche (or perhaps not), understanding where a target audience exists, building personal relationships, and following up with newcomers. Below are more detailed results on each theme and recommendations for nonprofits.

Niche Organizations

Every organization we interviewed was niche in its own way. Each organization had a strong understanding of their organization’s nicheness. Furthermore, each organization explained how they aim to consistently use niche language in marketing materials, on the website, and in

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

the way staff describe the nonprofit. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Explain your niche.** As an organization, it is important to market your nicheness. Prospective participants' interest is peaked by organizations that share their common interests, and often these interests are focused, rather than broad. Organizations should explain in detail exactly what they offer.
- **Create a niche.** Organizations with broad audiences might consider targeting these audiences through interest groups, micro-communities, and committees in order to create nicheness within the larger organization.
- **Differentiate.** Everyone is looking for something different. Show prospective participants what is different about the organization. If the organization provides morning walks, tell them. If the organization is inclusive of interfaith couples, tell them. If the organization accommodates those with special needs, tell them. Tell them what makes the organization unique.

Targeted Messaging

Many of the organizational staff we spoke with had a strong understanding of their organization's voice and how it targeted their desired audience. They explained that this messaging must be consistently used in marketing materials, on the website, and in the way staff describe the nonprofit. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Find the voice.** Often, targeted messaging is established with the organization's mission in mind. It should also incorporate how a nonprofit wants its target audience to perceive the organization. Voice can change over time as audience or strategy shifts, but the messaging should never lose sight of the mission.
- **An organization's messaging doesn't have to be dull.** Many of the organizations we

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

interviewed described their voice as cheeky, punny, empowering, fun, personal, touching, “farmy,” inspiring, or inclusive. No organization wants to be considered “drab.” Jewish organizations can position themselves as mainstream, but they can still find a way to personalize their communication.

- **Use a unified voice, but leave room for targeting multiple audiences.** Some of the organizations we interviewed are quite large, and they have maintained cohesion by staying true to their voice. However, for organizations that have disparate groups with smaller, more niche target audiences, they let the leaders of these factions dictate voice for local communications. A national or international organization may not speak the same language as all its constituents, and even a smaller organization with many subgroups should offer some autonomy. Organizations must define the audiences they hope to target and determine how messaging might be different for these audiences.
- **Learn how to target multiple audiences.** Once an organization determines that it needs to target multiple audiences, the question of “How?” comes up. Organizations should utilize segmented email groups, multiple social media platforms, and unique printed materials in order to speak to various audiences. If an organization is targeting a faction devoted to social activism, perhaps there is a separate email targeted just for them. If an organization aims to target parents and their tweens, perhaps it should create a Facebook account and a Snapchat account. When aiming to connect with seniors, organizations should offer printed materials.

Web Design

Many of the participants we spoke with said that the website was the first introduction they had to their organization. Our research suggests that websites are an important area for

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

nonprofits to focus time and energy. When prospective participants – regardless of their level of engagement – land on an organization’s homepage, they should quickly get a basic sense of who the organization is, what they do, and how they do it. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Nonprofit websites should be easy to navigate.** This includes a normative amount of main navigational links (think six or seven) that make sense to an outsider. If an outsider wouldn’t understand an acronym or term, it shouldn’t be a navigational option. If an organization wants to make a stronger statement, they can consider using on-message terminology for the navigation that can be understood by new visitors.
- **Photos are a must; videos are a bonus.** It is easier to look at a picture than to read a paragraph, and photos can give site visitors a quick lens into the nonprofit. Every homepage analyzed incorporated at least one photo or video. Make sure that these are high resolution to ensure that they look crisp on any computer. Videos should represent an organization as a teaser for what the visitor might expect.
- **Website responsiveness.** If a website isn’t responsive, it’s a big turn off for the 40% of internet users who visit websites on their mobile device.
- **Flaunt socials.** Visitors should be able to clearly find social media links on a nonprofit’s homepage.
- **Websites should be current.** This includes content as well as aesthetics. If an organization is unsure if it may have the resources to update the website, they should ask some of the newest participants what they thought when they first saw it. While this might not include a survey of those people who saw the website and chose not to engage with the organization, it can provide useful information.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

- **Incorporate targeted messaging.** The website is an easy opportunity to share the organizational personality with the world. Organizations should use language on the website with their audience in mind.

Word-of-Mouth

Everyone we interviewed realized the value of spreading information about their organization through WOM. Many relied on both organic WOM and WOM marketing. They created intentional channels to spread WOM by meeting with people individually, finding connectors and ambassadors and training them to share information about the organization with their contacts. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Embrace WOM.** WOM happens in person, online, everywhere. Participants will use a variety of modes to talk about an organization with which they are connected.
- **For good WOM, do good things.** Several organizations noted that, for positive WOM to spread organically, the organization has to be doing things people want to talk about. If participants have enjoyable, meaningful experiences with an organization, they will be more apt to share that information with friends and family. If participants have negative experiences, they will also share. Focus on creating those positive experiences.
- **Create an Ambassador program.** To drive WOM, organizations must strategically seek out tastemakers and role models who will spread the word.

Print Marketing

Almost every organization we interviewed uses print marketing, but only for select materials. Most time is focused away from print, online and in person. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Print isn't for everyone.** One participant was shocked at the idea of receiving a letter in

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

the mail from an organization and said it should be reserved for very special occasions.

But if an organization's target audience (e.g., older people) prefers print, more materials should be printed than not.

- **Print is important in some situations.** Many organizations noted that, when they are recruiting participants out of the office, having printed materials is a useful tool.
- **Make print special.** If an organization is working with participants who are not interested in printed materials, print should be used to make a statement. If print can be creative, fun, or exciting, these participants will forgive that it is printed.

Email Marketing

Every organization we interviewed emphasized that they are using email marketing. Some organizations spoke to the frequency of using email marketing, while others highlighted some of the reasons why email marketing doesn't always work. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Weekly.** If your organization operates each week and you have enough important information to send out, do so in a weekly email.
- **Biweekly.** If you don't have a reason to send out a weekly email (e.g., your organization doesn't offer programs every week), scale back and send a biweekly email. Your participants will happily wait for their bi-weekly email.
- **Pick one and stick to it.** If you are going the weekly route or the bi-weekly route, or even the monthly route, just be sure to pick one and stick to it. Your participants do better with consistency and look forward to their expected inbox delivery.
- **Writing Style.** Write with the organization's audience in mind by using language that speaks to specific target audiences. This includes the email subject lines and could

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

include segmenting emails to separate audiences. Subject lines like “Weekly Newsletter” are too general, and often participants are not enticed to open the email.

- **Email Design.** Use images, as they help draw participants into the email. Just like the website, an organization’s emails should be easy to read, easy to navigate, and responsive on multiple devices.

Social Media

Every organization interviewed used at least one of the six social media platforms we analyzed. Whether Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, or Vimeo, professionals and participants spoke to the importance of having a social media presence. We observed that specific organizations focused on certain social media platforms over others. The professional staff noted that these decisions were made based on which platforms were most utilized by their participants and target audience. Admittedly, both professionals and participants also discussed some pitfalls when using certain social media platforms. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Select a point person.** Before utilizing social media, organizational staff should ensure that they know who is responsible for posting and tweeting. Additionally, it is extremely important that social media presence uses targeted messaging. Therefore, the point person should have a strong understanding of the organization’s voice.
- **Determine which platforms to use.** Be particular about which social media platforms are right for the organization. While every organization interviewed uses Facebook, not everyone needs to use multiple platforms. To determine which platforms are most utilized by current and prospective participants, analyze platform usage or even ask current participants. Staff should create strategic goals before activating a new account.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

- **Use social media buttons everywhere.** After determining which social media platforms are right for the organization, be sure to embed those buttons on the website, link them on email marketing, and incorporate them in any external marketing. This will help build a following on each platform.
- **Post and tweet on a regular basis.** Organizations that post, tweet, and/or pin more frequently and consistently have a larger following. Before activating an account, organizations should create a strategic plan for how and what to post on these sites.

External Marketing

There was a strong divide between organizations that use external marketing and those that do not. Regardless, both those in favor and those against external marketing provided a rationale for their decision making. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **How to fish.** Determine the best avenues to market to prospective participants. Print marketing, online marketing, Jewish marketing, and secular marketing are all worth exploring to reach those prospective individuals. Perhaps there are interest-based websites that relate to the organization, email lists that could include the organization, or social media groups that draw the organization's target audience.

Analytics

Every organization we interviewed collected data from their participants in one way or another. Everyone also explained the importance of collecting this data to move the organization forward and achieve measurable goals. Many used databases and large-scale evaluations to collect data. Some used paper sign-up sheets, focus groups, web data, surveys, etc. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Record the data.** Every organization should make a plan for how they will track data and

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

enact that plan.

- **Data can come from anywhere.** Tracking numbers is a base form of data collection that isn't labor intensive. Organizations should work to collect this easy data. But data can be both quantitative and qualitative. Organizations should explore multiple data collection techniques, including requesting personal feedback from participants.
- **Use the data.** Recording data means nothing if it is never analyzed. Every organization should formulate a process for what data they should analyze and how frequently. If it is too difficult to make time for a staff person to do the analysis or no one on the team feels confident in data analysis, external sources can be used. Of course, analysis means nothing if no changes are made based on the results. Organizations should take the time to interpret the data and make positive changes.

Meeting them where they are

Many of the organizational staff we spoke with had a clear understanding of how and where to engage prospective participants. For example, meeting them in their neighborhoods, at other organizations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, online and offline, were just a few of the strategies utilized by these organizations. Yet, everyone interviewed shared examples of successful stories, as well as some of the challenges in meeting prospective participants. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Go to the people.** Find the people in their communities. Start establishing networks. Build from those networks. Grow together.
- **Get up and get out there.** Collaborate with organizations that have the same, or similar, target audience as the organization. Take the time to show up and network. Just don't forget to bring business cards and promotional materials.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

- **On and off-line.** There is value in making engagement digital, yet there are some audiences that do best offline. These audiences tend to be older, with less technological prowess. Organizations should know who they are reaching and acknowledge the needs of the target market.
- **Enlist others.** Galvanize current participants and have them support the organization in its efforts to engage prospective participants.

Relational Judaism

Every staff person and participant we interviewed reiterated the power of building relationships within the organization. Often, that was the stated reason why a participant continued to return to an organization. And many staff explained that relationship building is built into the culture of the organization. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Organizational culture is important.** Staff in many of the organizations interviewed went above and beyond to create an environment where people want to get to know each other.
- **There is value in a coffee date.** Meeting people one-on-one was an important step for many of the staff we interviewed. The meetings offer an opportunity to connect with participants on a deeper, more real level.
- **Be radical when welcoming.** Saying, “hello,” giving people nametags, making them feel “seen,” and connecting them with other participants was a crucial way for many of the organizations to create community.

Newcomer Follow-Up

Everyone we interviewed emphasized the importance of newcomer follow-up. Many spoke

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

to the value of personal follow-up, whereas others spoke about following up with technology. Some organizations even discussed how they follow up with participants from a programmatic perspective. Here are the most important recommendations we learned:

- **Call.** It never hurts to pick up the phone and call a newcomer. Tell them it was nice meeting them, ask about their experience, try to get a sense of what else they might be interested in.
- **Meet.** Take the time to meet newcomers in-person. Call them or email them and invite them to a meeting.
- **E-mail.** A short e-mail can go a long way. Additionally, it is important to collect newcomers' information and add them to any newsletter that they might benefit from receiving.
- **Invite.** Organizations should be sure to keep newcomers on their radar and invite them to upcoming events. For example, if a staff member from an organization recently met someone at an event and the individual shared that they love going on hikes and the organization is having a hiking event, let them know and ask them to join.

Conclusion

Jewish nonprofit organizations have finite resources and often lack the bandwidth to add to their already full portfolio. This thesis offers recommendations that give constructive, low-cost solutions that offer nonprofits the opportunity to engage previously untapped markets. If organizational staff consider and implement those marketing recommendations not previously executed or fully achieved, they will increase their ability to successfully engage disengaged Jews.

At the end of the day, the mission of an organization is its driving focus. Communication

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

is vital to express this mission to donors, staff, and active and prospective participants.

Marketing is necessary to inform, excite, and engage prospective participants to get involved with a nonprofit organization.

While many of these marketing strategies and tactics have withstood generations, others may shift with new innovations and developments in technology. For organizations to continue to reach untouched markets and connect with prospective participants, staff must continuously educate themselves about current marketing strategies. It is crucial to allocate resources and define staff roles to encourage professional development surrounding marketing and communication. Jewish nonprofits that strategically implement our recommendations and consider creative ideas will strengthen and secure their ongoing goals in building bridges to the disengaged Jewish population.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Organizational Staff Interview Questions

1. What are your organization's core values?
 - a. How do these values align with your commitment to engagement?
2. How does your organization define engagement?
 - a. How does your organization measure engagement?
 - b. How does your organization measure if someone is disengaged?
3. Which is your staff structure?
 - a. What staff members in your organization are primarily responsible for engagement?
4. In your opinion, what percentage of your membership do you believe was disengaged with the Jewish community before joining your organization?
 - a. In the past year, how many people do you think you have engaged who were previously disengaged (approximately)?
5. What strategies does your organization employ to engage those who are previously disengaged?
 - a. Do you find people through print marketing materials?
 - b. Do you find people through social media?
 - c. Do people self-select your organization through your website or other channels?
 - i. If yes, what channels?
6. Are there specific reasons you hear for why disengaged people decide to join your organization?

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

7. Can you take us through your initial steps when first connecting with disengaged members?
8. What does follow up look like for your organization?
 - a. Are their differences if the person is previously disengaged?
9. What methods do you find work best your organization?
10. Do certain communications/marketing tactics work better for disengaged people at different life stages (ex: Young, new families, retirees, etc.)?
 - a. How do you differentiate your communication/marketing strategies for these specific groups of people?
11. What about people who are transplants from another community - Do you consider them disengaged?
 - a. How do you reach out to this subset of people?
 - b. In your opinion, what percentage of your membership do you believe are transplants?

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Appendix B.*Newly Engaged Interview Questions*

1. How long have you been connected to _____ organization?
2. If any, what Jewish organizations were you connected with in the past (formally and informally)?
3. (If yes to #2) What made you disengage with these organizations?
 - a. Did you phase out of the organization?
 - b. Did you have a specific bad experience?
4. Before joining _____ organization, why did you feel that you were disconnected from the Jewish community?
5. Were you actively looking for a Jewish community when you found _____ organization?
6. How were you drawn to _____ organization?
7. If you remember, what was your first touch point with the organization?
 - a. Why did this encourage you to get more connected?
8. Were there additional steps taken by the organization to keep you engaged once you established a connection?
9. How often do you hear from _____ organization?
 - a. Emails?
 - b. Newsletters?
 - c. Social Media posts?
 - d. Print mailings?
 - e. Other?

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

- f. Too much? Too little?
10. How personalized are the communications you receive from _____ organization?
 11. Are there things you would change about how your organization reaches out to you?
 12. What has kept you engaged with _____ organization?
 13. How often do you participate with _____ organization?

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Appendix C.*Staff Interview Request*

Dear Professional,

Our names are Julia Hubner and Amy Mendelsohn, and we are both students in Hebrew Union College's Zelikow School for Jewish Nonprofit Management.

We are writing to you today because we'd love the opportunity to speak with you about your work. We are currently writing our masters thesis, and we're interested in learning what marketing and communications practices Jewish Nonprofits use to engage previously disengaged Jews. Your organization stood out as one that is excelling in this area, and we would love to interview you to learn more about how you do this.

We're hoping our research will help Jewish nonprofits better understand how their marketing practices can engage those on the fringes and grow their community. We would love to set up a time to speak to you for 20-30 minutes. Your knowledge and experience would be an immense help!

Please let us know when you have time to chat. We are aiming to set up a time with you during the month of September, so please send us some dates that might work for a phone call (or in-person interview). Also, if you need more information, please feel free to email or call us with questions.

We would like to thank you in advance and we greatly appreciate your time. Enjoy the rest of your summer. Looking forward to speaking with you soon!

Julia Hubner & Amy Mendelsohn

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Appendix D.*Participant Interview Request*

Dear First Name of Participant,

Our names are Julia Hubner and Amy Mendelsohn, and we are both students in Hebrew Union College's Zelikow School for Jewish Nonprofit Management. We are currently writing our masters thesis, and we're interested in learning what marketing and communications practices Jewish Nonprofits use to engage previously disengaged Jews.

We got your name from _____. We interviewed _____ about _____, because it stood out as a nonprofit that excelled in communicating to its participants. We are writing to you today because we'd love the opportunity to interview you and learn what practices were most effective in engaging you with the organization.

Can we set up a time to speak with you? We are hoping to spend 20-30 minutes to learn about your experience and involvement!

We are aiming to set up a time with you during the next two weeks, so please send us some dates that might work for a phone call (or in-person interview). We are on the west coast, so if your time zone is different, please let us know!

Also, if you need more information, please feel free to email or call us with questions.

We would like to thank you in advance and we greatly appreciate your time. Looking forward to speaking with you soon!

Julia Hubner & Amy Mendelsohn

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Appendix E.*Consent Form*

DESCRIPTION: You are asked to participate in a research study about engagement and communication by Jewish nonprofits. The researchers, Julia Hubner and Amy Mendelsohn, want to learn how Jewish nonprofits best communicate to disengaged members of the Jewish community for our Masters thesis in the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management. We’re hoping to determine best communication practices Jewish nonprofits can utilize to engage previously disengaged Jews. You are asked to be interviewed or observed... as part of this study.

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:

Julia Hubner (masters candidate in Jewish Nonprofit Management and Communication Management at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California) or

Amy Mendelsohn (Masters candidate in Jewish Nonprofit Management and Communication Management at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion and the University of Southern California)

RISKS AND BENEFITS: There are no risks associated with this study. Benefits include better understanding how communications methods can contribute to effective engagement strategies and contributing to enhanced scholarship in this field.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Interviews may involve 30 minutes of your time/ Observations involve one or more of the researchers attending an event or program offering and observing the experience. Time length dependent on length of program/event. Observers may follow up with a few participants afterwards, with their consent.

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PAYMENTS: There will be no payment for participation in this study, but the results can help your organization better communicate to disengaged populations.

AUDIO RECORDING: The recordings will be heard by Julia Hubner and Amy Mendelsohn only. The recordings will remain in their possession.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand that your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your name/agency's name will be used in publications based on this research, unless otherwise determined by yourself and the researchers.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Erik Ludwig, Director of the HUC-JIR School of Jewish Nonprofit Management: eludwig@huc.edu, 3077 University Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90007, or toll-free at 800-899-0925.

Please sign and date: I give consent to be audio-recorded / observed for this study / to be identified by name in publications resulting from this research:

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

The extra copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

Optional:

May I contact you with further questions? If so, please write your phone # or e-mail address:

Phone # _____

E-mail address _____

Thank you for participating.

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Appendix F.*Website Codebook***Coding locations:**

<https://www.moishehouse.org/>

<https://www.ikar-la.org>

<http://urbanadamah.org/>

<http://www.picounionproject.org/>

<http://www.atidla.com/>

<http://www.chaivillagela.org/>

<http://www.rebooters.net/>

<http://nuroots.org/>

<http://www.thekitchensf.org/>

<http://www.bendthearc.us/>

<https://www.pjlibrary.org/>

<https://www.birthrightisrael.com/>

<http://www.campinc.com/>

<http://www.bechollashon.org/>

<http://www.jccmaccabigames.org/>

<https://onetable.org/>

<http://www.jewbelong.com/>

Research Questions:

1. How does the organization's website utilize photos, videos, writing style, navigation, and aesthetics to speak to its visitors?

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

2. How accurately does the website of certain organization convey the community they represent?

Number of Units to Code: 36

- Each unit is a website homepage and/or “About” page.

Manifest variable: Number of Photos on Homepage (variable name: Photos)

Definition: Report the number of photos on each homepage. If a homepage includes rotators, each photo in the rotator will count individually. Photos include pictures that have been graphically altered, but do not include graphic images or logos.

Manifest variable: Number of Videos on Homepage (variable name: Videos)

Definition: Report the number of videos on each homepage.

Manifest variable: Number of Paragraphs on Homepage (variable name: Paragraphs)

Definition: Report the number of paragraphs on the homepage. A paragraph is any line of text separated by another with space. This does not include the navigation tabs, major titles, or text in marginal columns.

Manifest variable: Number of Tabs on Main Navigation (variable name: Tabs)

Definition: Report the number of tabs on the homepage’s main navigation.

Latent variable: Ease of use of Main Navigation (variable name: Navigation Ease)

Definition: The ease of use of the main navigation.

1 = not easy at all

2 = very little ease

3 = some ease

4 = very easy

5 = Extremely easy and clean

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Concrete Examples

Very poor: No navigation visible

Poor: Navigation confusing, repetitive, difficult to understand

Neither poor nor good: Some confusion with tabs, but most are easy to understand

Good: Standard navigation, easy to find, easy to use

Very good: Navigation stands out, obvious ease in navigation, comprehensive

Latent variable: Use of Targeted Messaging on the Website (variable name: Targeted Messaging)

Definition: The websites should have a distinct set of keywords and phrases that collectively present a targeted messaging strategy for the organization. Each organization may have their own unique voice, but it should be evident when viewing the homepage and “About” sections. Video on the homepage and About page will be incorporated into the messaging variable.

1: no targeted messaging

2: not much targeted messaging

3: some targeted messaging

4: significant targeted messaging

5: all targeted messaging

Keywords:

Hey, 20-somethings, meaningful experiences, deeply grounded

Latent variable: Website Aesthetics (variable name: Aesthetics)

Definition: homepage and “About” pages are designed with the visitor in mind. The design is created in a way to draw in the visitor to introduce them to the organization. For the researchers, an aesthetically pleasing site incorporates legible fonts, pages with content elements that are

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

structurally organized. The researchers prefer clean lines, uncluttered pages – this can sometimes mean fewer columns so that the eye can focus more directly at important content. The researchers prefer more open space on each page, which can mean less text-reliant pages, use of one to two fonts maximum, and complimentary color palette.

1: not at all aesthetically pleasing

2: not many aesthetically pleasing elements

3: some aesthetically pleasing elements

4: several aesthetically pleasing elements

5: extremely aesthetically pleasing

Manifest Variable: Accessibility of Social Media Feeds (variable name: Social) Definition:

The accessibility of social media on each homepage.

1 = Zero social media links

2 = Hard to find social media links

3 = Social media links obvious

Manifest variable: Number of Paragraphs on the “About” Page (variable name: About Paragraphs)

Definition: Report the number of paragraphs on the “About” page.

Manifest variable: Webpage responsiveness on Phone (variable name: Responsive

Definition: Report whether the website is responsive on cell phones.

2 = Yes

1 = No

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

Appendix G.*Social Media Codebook***Coding locations:**

Moishe House:

<https://www.facebook.com/MoisheHouse.org/>

<https://twitter.com/moishehouse>

<https://www.instagram.com/moishehouse/>

www.youtube.com/user/MoisheHouse/

Ikar Los Angeles:

<https://www.facebook.com/IKARLosAngeles>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IKARlosangeles>

https://twitter.com/IKAR_LA

Urban Adamah:

<https://www.facebook.com/urbanadamahjsc>

<https://twitter.com/urbanadamah>

<https://www.instagram.com/urbanadamah/>

Pico Union Project:

<https://www.facebook.com/PicoUNIONProject>

<https://twitter.com/picounionproj>

Atid LA @ Sinai Temple:

<https://www.facebook.com/AtidLA>

<https://twitter.com/AtidLA>

Reboot:

ENGAGING THE DISENGAGED

<https://www.facebook.com/Rebooters>

<https://twitter.com/reboot>

<https://www.instagram.com/nationaldayofunplugging/>

NuRoots:

<https://www.facebook.com/NuRoots>

<https://www.instagram.com/nurootsla/>

The Kitchen:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheKitchensf/>

<https://twitter.com/TheKitchenSF>

<https://vimeo.com/user30189714>

Bend the Arc:

<https://www.facebook.com/bendthearc>

https://twitter.com/bend_thearc

<https://www.youtube.com/user/BendTheArc>

PJ Library:

<https://www.facebook.com/PJLibrary>

<https://twitter.com/PJLibrary>

<https://www.instagram.com/pjlibrary/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9DJINUUXTuAJ2nAqTrFziQ>

Birthright Israel:

<https://www.facebook.com/TaglitBRI>

<https://twitter.com/birthright>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMzcE80CMTs9jr-28UpqGWg>

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<https://www.instagram.com/birthrightisrael/>

Camp Inc.:

<https://www.facebook.com/CampInc>

<https://twitter.com/CampInc>

https://www.instagram.com/camp_inc/

<https://vimeo.com/campinc/>

Be'chol Lashon:

<https://www.facebook.com/bechollashon>

<https://twitter.com/bechollashon>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/bechollashon>

JCC Maccabi:

<https://www.facebook.com/JCCMaccabiGames>

<https://twitter.com/jccmaccabigame>

<https://www.instagram.com/jccmaccabigames/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/jccAssociation/videos> (Only researched Maccabi Games Videos)

One Table:

<https://www.facebook.com/OneTableShabbat>

<https://twitter.com/OneTableShabbat>

<https://www.instagram.com/OneTableShabbat/>

<https://www.pinterest.com/onetableshabbat/>

Jewbelong.com:

<https://www.facebook.com/jewbelong>

<https://twitter.com/jewbelong>

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<https://www.instagram.com/jewbelong/>

Research Questions:

1. How do each organization's social media pages emphasize their unique targeted messaging?
2. How accurately does the social media of the organization convey the niche community they represent?

Number of Units to Code: 51

- Each unit is a main social media page connected to a Jewish nonprofit organization, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and Vimeo.

Manifest variable: Number of main social media pages associated with the nonprofit (variable name: Socials)

Definition: Report the number of social media pages each nonprofit maintains. This includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and Vimeo accounts. Only main accounts were analyzed, so this does not include any sub-pages that factions of the organization maintain.

Manifest variable: If a nonprofit has a Facebook account (variable name: FB)

Definition: Report on whether the nonprofit has a Facebook account.

2 = Yes

1 = No

Manifest variable: Number of Facebook followers (variable name: FB Followers)

Definition: Report the number of people following the nonprofit's Facebook account.

Manifest variable: Number of Facebook Likes (variable name: FB Likes)

Definition: Report the number of overall likes on the Facebook page.

Manifest variable: Average Review Rating (variable name: FB Stars)

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Definition: Report the average star review rating the nonprofit has received on Facebook. This is only possible if the nonprofit has included a review plug-in on the page.

Manifest variable: Number of Facebook Reviewers (variable name: FB Reviewers)

Definition: Report the number of reviewers the Facebook account has received. This is only possible if the nonprofit has included a review plug-in on the page.

Manifest variable: If a nonprofit has a Twitter account (variable name: Twitter)

Definition: Report on whether the nonprofit has a Twitter account.

2 = Yes

1 = No

Manifest variable: Number of Twitter followers (variable name: Twitter Followers)

Definition: Report the number of people following the nonprofit's Twitter account.

Manifest variable: Number of Tweets (variable name: Tweets)

Definition: Report the number of overall Tweets the nonprofit has sent.

Manifest variable: If a nonprofit has an Instagram account (variable name: Instagram)

Definition: Report on whether the nonprofit has an Instagram account.

2 = Yes

1 = No

Manifest variable: Number of Instagram followers (variable name: Insta Followers)

Definition: Report the number of people following the nonprofit's Instagram account.

Manifest variable: Number of Instagram Posts (variable name: Insta Posts)

Definition: Report the number of overall Instagram images the nonprofit has posted.

Manifest variable: If a nonprofit has a Pinterest account (variable name: Pinterest)

Definition: Report on whether the nonprofit has a Pinterest account.

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2 = Yes

1 = No

Manifest variable: Number of Pinterest followers (variable name: Pinterest Followers)

Definition: Report the number of people following the nonprofit's Pinterest account.

Manifest variable: Number of Pins (variable name: Pins)

Definition: Report the number of overall Pinterest images the nonprofit has pinned.

Manifest variable: If a nonprofit has a YouTube or Vimeo account (variable name: YouTube/Vimeo)

Definition: Report on whether the nonprofit has a YouTube or Vimeo account.

2 = Yes

1 = No

Manifest variable: Number of YouTube/Vimeo subscribers (variable name: Youtube/Vimeo Subscribers)

Definition: Report the number of people subscribed to the nonprofit's YouTube or Vimeo account.

Manifest variable: Number of YouTube/Vimeo videos (variable name: Youtube/Vimeo Videos)

Definition: Report the number of videos uploaded to the nonprofit's YouTube or Vimeo account.

Manifest variable: Number of YouTube or Vimeo video views (variable name: Video Views)

Definition: Report the number of overall number of views videos have received on the nonprofit's YouTube or Vimeo account.

Latent variable: Targeted Messaging distinguished on social media channels (variable

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name: Targeted Messaging)

Definition: The social media channels should have a distinct set of keywords and phrases that collectively present a targeted message from the organization. Each organization may have its own unique voice, but it should be evident when viewing the social media feeds the nonprofit maintains.

1: no targeted messaging

2: not much targeted messaging

3: some targeted messaging

4: significant targeted messaging

5: all targeted messaging

Keywords:

#ICYMI, New Cook? No Probz, Going on a shtetl food “trip”

Concrete example:

A not at all targeted message could be: “Weekly Torah study class: Parashat Bo – Exodus 10:1-11:3.”

A very targeted message could be: “If you love Torah, join us for the weekly Torah study class. We’ll flee Egypt together and incorporate the lessons into our home Seders!”