

One Wicked Internship:

A Public Relations, Social Media and Marketing Internship with Wicked Creative

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Executive Summary

The following research explores a PR, social media and marketing internship with Wicked Creative in Las Vegas, NV for fulfilment of the capstone requirement. Through the application of theory and the use of practice and observation, the internship serves as a professional experience and research opportunity. Through the process of completing the internship, I was able to apply theories of autoethnography and strong cultures (Deal & Kennedy 1982) to gain insight into an internship experience and Wicked Creative as an organization. Motivation to approach the internship in this way came from prior internship experience with Wicked Creative and an interest in organizational communication from the perspective of organizational culture. The objectives of the internship included practicing the art of PR to serve the organization and observe the communication within the organization to draw general conclusions about its culture and provide members with suggestions. With the completion of this internship, a full report and portfolio of outcomes, in accordance with the requirements set out by the department, have been delivered to the capstone chair for approval.

Introduction

Wicked Creative, the trendy and influential vision of its President, Stephanie Wilson, began serving the Las Vegas area in 2006. The boutique public relations (PR) firm grew into a hub of PR, marketing and social media services for dining, hospitality and entertainment organizations in the area. In 2014, Wicked expanded to the San Diego area and began working on projects for companies in major cities all across the country. Wicked currently serves 26 clients with a staff of ten and offers summer internships to a select few students looking for experience working with high end Las Vegas clients.

In the summer of 2016, I was one of six interns who completed a hands on PR firm experience collecting press clips, writing press releases, creating social media content and more. This summer, I took that experience a step further and served as an unpaid intern fulfilling all of the standard intern responsibilities in addition to shadowing other members of the organization to get a better understanding of how the organization works and what improvements could be made to make employees and the organization as a whole more effective. The internship ran June 5, 2017 to July 21, 2017 for eight hours per week under the supervision of internship coordinator Bridget Cirone.

The idea for this capstone came from a need for experience and a sense of curiosity. For several months before being offered this internship I had applied to several other internships hoping to be able to network and gain more experience in PR. Unsuccessful in those pursuits, I decided to take advantage of the networking I had already done to inquire about taking an internship at Wicked to the next level. That, combined with my recent interest in organizational communication, led me to develop an internship plan with Wicked staff to see what more I could learn from an organization that had already taught me so much.

This internship was different from the last in that, this time, I was looking more at the organization as a whole and less at the individual pieces of work that the interns typically produce. The two focuses of the internship were practice and observation. Practicing the art of PR allowed me to participate in the organization as other interns do to successfully observe the organization from the inside.

The primary method used for observation was autoethnography, a way of studying the world through the experience of the researcher. The term autoethnography literally means self (auto) study of people and culture (ethnography). Similar to its cousin method ethnography, autoethnography is systematic observation that is more subjective than its other qualitative counterparts due to the fact that it is more intimate and personal for the researcher (Egeli 2017). Though that serves as one of its main criticisms, it is also what makes the method beneficial to the current project (Baías 2014, Egeli 2017, Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011). Autoethnography gave me the opportunity to make systematic observations about the organization and internship program while participating as an intern to get the full experience. This also adds a personal touch to the suggestions that will be delivered at the conclusion of the internship as they will be from someone who has experienced the situations first hand.

The goals of this internship extend beyond an autoethnographic study. In addition to acquiring information about the organization, I have added pieces to my portfolio that show diversity in my writing and ability to work professionally with big name clients. I was able to improve my skills in social media by writing posts and reviewing analytics. In addition, I was able to successfully put together a PR plan and be part of the execution of that plan. The completed work has been compiled into a small portfolio (see appendix B). In terms of observation, I was able to apply autoethnography and strong cultures to the internship and offer

detailed accounts of my experiences and suggestions for the organization based off of those experiences (see appendix A).

The following provides a review of the current body of literature surrounding internships, PR, social media and organizational communication relative to this project followed by further explanation of the internship responsibilities and use of autoethnography. An analysis of the internship details experiences and outlines the application of autoethnography and the use of Deal & Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures. Suggestions are made for how to apply the information gathered throughout the internship and a summary of the internship provides an overview of findings and lessons learned.

Literature Review

It is important to understand the current literature on internships and interpersonal relations within the internship setting, organizational communication influence in general and specifically in a PR firm and current findings for the translation of PR theories from classroom to firm.

Internships and Interpersonal Relationships

Going into an internship in any setting can be daunting for both the intern and the supervisor with the uncertainty that comes with expectations and evaluations. Adapting coursework to real world practice can be difficult for students and can often lead to differing expectations about type and quality of work among interns and supervisors (Sapp & Zhang 2009). Just as Sapp and Zhang (2009) claim, most of what is known about preparing students for the workforce post graduation is assumed. There are some tools used to measure the gap between education and need in the real world, but not one has produced a system that perfectly prepares students for the types of work and situations they will face when applying their knowledge

outside of the classroom (Sapp and Zhang 2009). Not only does this facilitate the need for feedback between employers and educators, but it makes it that much more critical for interns and employers to communicate about expectations and ground rules for the inevitable adjustment period.

Evaluations play a large role in the internship setting and the way interns communicate with employers knowing that is a part of the experience. Since supervisor evaluations of intern work tend to be lower than self evaluations completed by interns, it is crucial for both parties to maintain open communication and feedback channels throughout the internship (McDonough, Rodriguez & Prior-Miller 2009). Evaluations can be used as tools rather than punishment to aid in the way students adjust to being employees (Sapp & Zhang 2009). The communication between the two parties is influenced by the formalities and assumptions that accompany the internship role. This should be taken into account when approaching the communication situation in order for both parties to be considered competent communicators working toward the same goal.

The complexity of the relationship between managers and PR practitioners is one that needs to be continually negotiated in order to make sure the organization has an effective output process and that relationships are maintained within the organization (Johansson & Larsson 2015). Johansson and Larsson (2015) point out that there is often a disconnect between those who work with the idea of PR and those who practice it on a daily basis. It is only with the feedback of the parties involved in the PR situation that management can be effective and continue to improve. It can be overwhelming for interns to consider this type of communication with higher ups, however it is important to keep in mind that there is a larger goal and organization that suffer the effects of a lack of communication (Sapp & Zhang 2009). These

principles serve as indications of issues to be aware of in any internship setting in an effort to participate in effective communication.

Organizational Communication

One modern approach to organizational communication that is particularly fitting for this organization is a cultural approach which views the organization as a culture with rites, rules and rituals that define the practices and relationships within the organization (Miller 2012). Strong cultures present values, heroes, cultural networks, rites and rituals that pertain to the organization and its members (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Values describe the things that the organization prioritizes (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Often found in mission statements or other company documents, these values guide the organization to make decisions and act in certain ways, just like values guide individuals. Every culture has its heroes, the people that embody the values that the rest of the group hold in such a way that that individual is seen as a primary role model to the rest of the organization's members (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Cultural networks are simply the channels through which members of the organization communicate with one another (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggest that there are formal cultural networks, such as a form or system to sending information to all members of the organization, as well as informal cultural networks, such as gathering in the breakroom to exchange the daily gossip. Finally, rites, activities in which one is able to engage in after meeting a certain cultural requirement, and rituals, the ceremonies used to celebrate, punish or mourn among members, are seen as ways to solidify the culture and differentiate it from other groups (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Deal and Kennedy (1982) suggest that these four elements can be found in organizational cultures that are considered present and strong by its members and by third party observers.

Specifically in PR settings, the environment has shown to have an influence on organizational culture, practitioners and consequently their perspective and product for clients (Everett 1990). The differences in culture between two firms could mean the difference in work for clients making the organizational culture of interest to more than just the members of the organization. The culture is also, in part, determined by the practitioners and the work they do (Everett 1990). This sociocultural view of the organization, its members and its product further emphasizes the need to understand the organization in order to continually improve it.

One way to evaluate organizational communication is via an organizational audit. This process includes identifying the existing forms of organizational communication including the purpose of the communication, the operational procedures and the structural elements to then evaluate them based on a predetermined framework (Greenbaum 1974). The primary focus within the audit is identifying if the channels already established for organizational communication that lead to productivity (Greenbaum 1974). While each organization is different and has different goals, the primary purpose of any organization is to be productive, making this the ultimate goal of the communication as well. In context for this project, the audit will assume the framework of Deal and Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures and the communication will be assessed based on whether or not it achieves the organization's goals and, ultimately, allows the organization to be productive in the most efficient manner.

Autoethnography

While there are many approaches researchers can take in an observational study, the nature of this particular project is well suited for autoethnography. The idea of studying people and cultures as a genuine and active participant in the group can raise many questions of concern for the validity of the findings considering the nature of the method lends itself to being more

subjective than other approaches (Baías 2014, Egeli 2017, Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011). On the other hand, these same reasons for concern are what justify the method for use in settings such as this one. By allowing students to study their surroundings through systematic observation, a different point of view can be established in the minds of others and, in this case, the organization can benefit from the feedback obtained in the final report (Galle & Lingard 2010). For this internship, the framework of Deal and Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures in conjunction with an autoethnographic approach allowed for systematic observation that provided more objective data collection while also enabling an intimate research experience with deeper results.

Theories in Practice

One function internships serve for students is as an opportunity to understand how classroom knowledge functions in a real world setting. Specifically for social media, in the context of a Facebook internship, students had the opportunity to adapt their skill sets to the work and get feedback from supervisors on what the organization thought was the most important criteria in their work (McEuchern 2011). This process and experience has not been overlooked by academics. Importance is being placed on the feedback of PR practitioners as to what direction PR is headed and how theories can better assist practitioners entering the field moving forward (Wehmeier 2009). It is only through practice and feedback that these findings continue to influence and adjust classroom learning to better fit the needs of professionals.

One of the primary areas that Wicked Creative is focusing on for its clients and the organization itself is social media. Adapting to a changing media environment, many organizations, including Wicked, have taken to social media as a primary resource for communicating with consumers and targeting audiences more directly than before (Papasolomou

& Melanthiou 2012). Using ideas as simple in the PR world as McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda setting theory have influenced the way their clients communicate with their target audiences and how Wicked staff communicates with clients about their PR plans. Their primary approach to social media focuses on frequency over skillfulness as defined by Engesser and Humprecht (2015). Frequency and skillfulness are determined to be mutually exclusive as they display two different user types (Engesser & Humprecht 2015). Frequency tends to appeal to younger audiences as a way of keeping up with the user and having them be at the forefront of the audience members' thoughts more often (Engesser & Humprecht 2015). The use of social media not only gives a better idea of the organization and their approach, but it also serves as another illustration and learning experience of the translation of theories learned in the classroom to application for real clients.

The current body of research suggests that there is some work to be done in the field of internships and their organizations as well as how knowledge from the classroom translates to the field. With these findings, the objectives for the current internship are as follows:

Objective 1: Practice the art of effective PR and serve the organization with content creation for clients including, but not limited to, press releases and social media content.

Objective 2: Observe the communication and practices within the organization and use Deal and Kennedy's (1982) theory of strong cultures to better understand the organization and provide suggestions to members.

These objectives are met using the method described below and are demonstrated with the listed outcomes provided in the analysis.

Method

This internship was completed through both practice and observation. Through the

Wicked internship program, all participants are required to assist with press clippings, writing press releases and creating and curating social media content. These responsibilities fulfil the objective of serving the organization with the content creation by obtaining practice and skill needed to be successful in the field. I was one of five interns for the summer, however I only had the opportunity to work with one of them during my shifts. Unlike the other interns who were assigned to one Wicked staff member for the duration of their internship, I had the opportunity to work with multiple people. This boosted the quality of the autoethnography and the observations I made using Deal and Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures in that I interacted with more members of the organization, but in a similar manner every time.

The daily responsibilities included press clipping collections and assignments given by Wicked staff. In my case, I had the opportunity to do press clippings for the same five clients throughout the internship and some additional clients as the need presented itself. I then reported directly to Bridget, the internship coordinator, for further assignments.

Over the course of the internship, I had the opportunity to complete press releases, media alerts, listings releases, social media posts, PR plans, monthly reports, pitch lists, media contact lists, fact sheets, press clippings and collateral packages. Press releases were typically concerning new food and beverage specials and were sent to a pre generated list of local reporters that we worked with on a regular basis. The media alerts, in my experience, were used for celebrity sightings at restaurant grand openings or night clubs. Listings releases were used to communicate with local publications about our clients and their offerings for a permanent listing with their publication. Social media posts were written for seven days at a time in a pre generated format that capitalized on the use of common hashtags and photos to generate more buzz around the posts. The PR plans were a combination of strategy and schedule to outline the who, what,

when, where, why and how of the client's offerings for the next six months. The plans were broken down by month and include details that anyone new to the account would need to assist in the execution of the plan. Monthly reports itemized the exposure that each piece we worked on received and how much that equates to in advertising dollars for the client. These reports are primarily a way to keep track of monthly reach and justify the use of PR tactics to the client so that they will continue using our services. Pitch lists are specific to the subject matter and include both local and national media contacts who have interest in the subject. These lists are many times unique in that they include names that we have not worked with before meaning they require extra time and attention. Media contact lists served as a way of organizing all media contacts that we had worked with in the past by their publication and areas of interest. Fact sheets are generated for each client as a way of detailing all pertinent information about their organization as a reference when working with the account. Press clippings include every mention of a client in a media outlet and are primarily used as a way of keeping track of which pitches were picked up and as a way of showing the client their exposure. Collateral packages include everything from PR plans to press clippings. These packages are taken to meetings with monthly equivalency reports to review the previous work that has been done for the client and to make adjustments for the upcoming month. All of these responsibilities played a role in the greater operation and allowed me the opportunity to see the cycle of PR pitches for multiple clients.

Similar to my internship in 2016, interns were expected to arrive on time to check email and begin working immediately on press clippings for their assigned clients. The new office space allows interns to have individual cubicles which is beneficial in ensuring there is enough space to complete magazine and newspaper clippings as well in addition to regular assignments.

If there were no other pending assignments, I reported directly to Bridget who gave me assignments for her three clients or offered my time to someone else. Since each shift was limited to four hours due to space constraints, I was be expected to wrap up projects before leaving at lunch by giving the project supervisor a report from the day and leaving notes for the next intern if applicable. This daily routine is intended to streamline work and reduce the amount of miscommunication during the work day. Significant pieces of work, excluding items such as press clippings and media contact lists, completed during this internship are included in the portfolio attached.

The observation portion of the project was conducted using autoethnography. As stated earlier, autoethnography is a systematic way of collecting information about people and cultures where the researcher is an acting member of the group (Ellis et al. 2011). In this case, autoethnography is beneficial in that it provides the researcher with a better understanding of the situation and adds validity to the suggestions provided based on personal experience and observation. This is not to say that autoethnography was used as a way to convey opinions about the organization. Instead, it gives an inside look at the inner workings of the organization and, in this case, specifically the internship program to gain a better understanding through lived experience.

Observations were made throughout the work day to observe the organization's members as they performed their day to day tasks. Time was set aside specifically to talk to staff members about their experiences within the organization as a comparison for their demonstrated behavior. Acts such as conversations between co workers, intern to staff communication, storytelling, communication with clients, email etiquette, organizational documents and nonverbal messages were recorded for their significance within Deal and Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures

framework. The significant communication events recorded were deemed significant based on their fit into one of Deal & Kennedy's (1982) four facets of a strong organizational culture. These events could be an expression of values, heroes, cultural networks or rites and rituals specific to the organization's culture. A value could be expressed in a conversation about procedure expressing reasoning behind a particular action based on what the organization feels is important. A hero might be someone that everyone else in the office talks about because he or she lives and breathes what the organization is all about. A cultural network is a way of communicating that is specific to the organization and how they function such as using a particular email protocol. Rites and rituals present themselves as ceremonies or tasks that individuals in the organization partake in for an orientation or a promotion that serve as a culturally significant representation of being a true member of the organization. These examples of scenarios under Deal & Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures framework give a brief look at the types of observations recorded about the culture of Wicked Creative.

The layout of the office benefited the observation portion of this project in that the open office space, where interns and staff have the same type of office cubicle, makes it easier to see and hear the staff's communication. One challenge with the observations was that the receptionist and two of the account executives are in their own offices away from the rest of the organization's members. Fortunately, the offices have floor to ceiling windows, so some observations could still be made without obstructing the normal function of the organization. These observations were recorded and the journal of these observations is attached.

Analysis

The deliverables for this experience include both a portfolio of work completed during the internship and recorded accounts of experiences and communication within the organization.

The portfolio (see appendix B) contains samples of work including, but not limited to, press releases, social media content and reports that were completed throughout the internship. This work adds to my existing portfolio as examples of my more recent pieces and as examples of different types of work that I had not previously had experience completing. This serves as evidence of the practical field experience I gained while completing this internship and will hopefully support my resume when applying for positions in the field.

In addition to the portfolio, I have journaled key experiences from the internship using the framework of Deal and Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures. These experiences have been recorded within this framework to use as evidence in drawing conclusions about the organization. The narratives serve as a general representation of the culture of Wicked through the criteria of rites and rituals, values, heroes and cultural network. Each category includes accounts of personal experiences and potential implications of those experiences. These illustrations, delivered in narrative format, will be the basis of the suggestions as they connect to the established framework. These suggestions, though for Wicked based off of experiences within that organization, are presented in such a way that they could apply to other organizations in hopes that a similar structure could be used to examine other internship programs in the same way. Further recommendations are given for applying this framework using autoethnography in other internship and/or corporate settings.

Portfolio

The attached portfolio includes press releases, social media content, monthly equivalency reports, a PR plan and an organization fact sheet. The press releases included for La Cave Wine & Food Hideaway are standard promotions that the client conducts for holidays and for slower weeks of the year to drive traffic. The Americana listing release is essentially a fact sheet for the

media that was used as a way to communicate with media outlets the basic client information so that they could be included in general listings through the publication. The social media content for Americana, TREVI and La Cave is all fairly standard for how Wicked approaches social media for its clients. The photos used, frequency of posts and hashtags commonly used are a part of PR plans that had been developed at the beginning of the year to be used as a guideline for composing posts.

Aside from content, I also had the opportunity to work on internal documents. The equivalency reports for Pancho's Las Vegas and Life Time Athletic were compiled based on templates used for all clients so that the report includes press releases for the month, social media stats, media hits by outlet type and topic, the publicity value of the media hits and the links to any online content from the month. Print media is scanned and delivered along with the report during monthly client meetings. Beverly Hills Rejuvenation Center's PR plan was developed based on the client's existing portfolio for their other locations so that it could include products and services worth pitching to different outlets based on the season or issue. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work on this plan not only because interns typically are not allowed to edit any sort of plan or strategy document, but also because this was a new client and this was the first plan, aside from their initial contract and strategy, that they were presented. This version of the plan was put in place and is currently wrapping up heading into the new year. The final piece included in the portfolio is the fact sheet for the Nevada Dispensary Association (NDA). With the legalization of recreational marijuana in Nevada, the NDA was in need of someone to manage their press and collect media hits. I put together the initial fact sheet and had the opportunity to compile press clippings for them throughout the summer. Though I was not able

to attend, I was also able to assist with their press conferences and help set them up with a media strategy moving forward.

All of the items included in the portfolio were used and presented to clients. These samples have all been added to my personal portfolio in hopes of demonstrating my experience to future employers.

Strong Cultures

Deal & Kennedy (1982) proposed that each organization has a culture and those that include certain aspects could be considered strong cultures. To be considered a strong culture, the organization must present a series of values, heroes, cultural networks and rites and rituals. With these four factors, Deal & Kennedy (1982) suggest that the organization is defined with personified qualities that guide the organization and its members in how they think and act. The greater significance of an organization having a strong culture can be thought about just as one might think about relations with another person. Individuals who know what they believe, embody those beliefs, have ways of communicating with themselves and others that align with their beliefs and ways of acknowledging milestones may be perceived as having a more solid core than those who do not. The appeal of this consistency in thought and practice can be seen in organizations as well as in the members of the organization who establish a culture that gives the organization a personality.

Just like people, every organization is different. Organizations and their members behave differently based on the established culture (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Just as we understand cultures defined by region or interests, we come to understand the culture of an organization by looking at small instances that hold meaning in the greater definition of what it means to be a member of that organization. By examining day to day behaviors, one can draw conclusions

about the organization's culture. Deal & Kennedy's (1982) framework provides a more simplified way of organizing observations that clearly defines culture. The four categories are all connected, one influencing the next, to piece together a picture of the organization's culture. The heroes represent the values of the organization, the cultural networks are established by the heroes and align with the organization's values and the rites and rituals conducted within the organization happen through cultural networks by the heroes in an effort to display the values of the organization.

The following identifies narratives within each of the four categories outlined by Deal & Kennedy (1982). Each category is defined, examples are described and conclusions and suggestions are made about and for the organization based on the evidence provided.

Values. Just as individuals hold a set of values or beliefs, organizations with strong cultures are guided by core values that define the way that the organization operates, the decisions members make and even who is worthy of being a member of the organization in the first place (Deal & Kennedy 1982). These underlying principles are what define the organization's personality because they are the very thing that the organization is about. For example, the National Park Service defines their core values as shared stewardship, excellence, integrity, tradition and respect (NPS). Their value of shared stewardship combines discovering new answers to environmental issues and sharing ones that are already known (NPS). This effort is a guiding principle for their organization as a whole leading preservation and education efforts. A recent investment into preservation efforts for American Indian tribes and Alaskan Native groups is one example of their preservation efforts putting shared stewardship into practice (Diamond 2017). In short, the reason the National Park Service conducts preservation

efforts is because they care about preservation efforts. This same idea holds true in other organizations according to their identified values.

As in most new positions, the first thing I did when I arrived at Wicked to start my internship was go through a company orientation. Though informal in nature, this was the time where Bridget, the internship coordinator, shared what for the other interns was the first look into the organization and the organization's culture. This time was spent identifying how interns fit into the organization and what was to be expected of us throughout the internship. Because of this, it was also a prime time to clearly identify some of the organization's values. Most of the values were detailed in the policies and procedures. Though not listed as values, the decisions in how the organization will operate are based on greater values that represent what the organization cares about. One example of this is the value of professionalism. Multiple times in the policies and procedures it mentioned the need for professionalism in every piece of communication whether it be a phone call, email or in person conversation. The need to keep communication professional is not exclusive to this organization or industry, however it is a value that Wicked holds strongly and demonstrates in communication with clients. More examples of the value of professionalism in communication are best understood through the lens of cultural networks.

During the orientation day, we had the opportunity to review the curriculum for the internship. Unlike my last internship with Wicked, there was much more focus on educating and training interns as opposed to having them complete small mindless tasks. This example of a newer organizational value played out throughout the internship as interns were coached on how to complete assignments to gain experience. My experience with this value came into play when I worked on the PR plan for Beverly Hills Rejuvenation Center. When I was first given the

assignment, I looked like a deer in the headlights because I had never completed a PR plan outside of the classroom. Being unaware of what the expectations were in terms of content and formatting, Account Coordinator Megan gave me access to previous PR plans to use as a reference and guided me in how to search for outlets and reporters to pitch. She had a to-do list that went on for three pages, but she took the time to help teach me instead of letting me struggle through it or decide I could not do it all together. This value placed on education, from what I gathered in conversations with the staff, was not well accepted at first. The push to change values often faces resistance as does any push for change. With this value placed education adopted by the organization and its members, the personality of the organization and the culture has changed just as it would if this were taking place for an individual.

Within the context of intern education, the value of separating work of personal life was expressed through setting up communication channels. Last year, it was expected that interns had their email setup on their phones to respond to emails at anytime. The purpose of this was primarily rooted in the fact that interns were also fully responsible for assignments meaning interns served as the primary contact for clients and partners. This time around, interns were specifically asked not to add their email on their phones. It was expressed that the staff and previous interns recognized the importance of separating work and personal time which then influenced the distribution of responsibilities for assignments. This particular value has since influenced the organization's operation and the execution of other values.

Client satisfaction, a value that many organizations adopt to some extent, is placed at the forefront at Wicked. The idea that “the customer is always right” holds true when dealing with clients even if it means sacrificing time, other efforts or what the account coordinator thinks is right. This value has held from year to year at Wicked making it one of the stronger core values.

For example, last year when working with one particular client on their social media content, they expressed that they had no desire to advertise that they were a PokéStop despite the popularity of PokémonGo at the time. Against our better judgment, the account coordinator and I abided by the clients wishes and did not try further to convince them otherwise. A similar instance took place this year while working with another client who had a different opinion as to how frequently and where they should be posting on social media. The frustration that comes from acting this way influences the function of the established cultural networks in the office discussed later.

Values, the ideas and beliefs that organizations see as their guiding principles, are the core of the personality and operation of the organization (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Though not necessarily written as one, these values are the foundation of the organization and the reasoning behind the organization's decisions. In the case of Wicked, their values of professionalism, education, separation of work and personal time and client satisfaction are some of the strongest displayed values within the organization.

Heroes. The individuals who embody the values of the organization are the organization's heroes (Deal & Kennedy 1982). These are the people who everyone else in the organization looks up to and can say they are as much a part of the organization as the organization is a part of them. A hero could be anyone from a CEO to a intern, the criteria for being a hero is simply that they are essentially legends in the organization. The Walt Disney Company recognizes its heroes in a public way. Walt Disney is quite obviously the hero of the organization, but the company likes to focus on current heroes as a form of recognition. The Walt Disney Legacy Award, the company's highest honor, is presented to Cast Members (employees) who, "represent the legacy of Walt Disney by exhibiting the same characteristics"

(Nina 2016). The award recipients are nominated by their peers and selected based on leader reviews attesting to their attitudes and behaviors that strongly align with the company's values (Jones 2016). Award recipients are presented with a blue name tag as a symbol of their achievement (Jones 2016). In my personal experience working in the organization with award recipients, these individuals are truly spoken of as heroes. They are the people that everyone strives to be like because they are the people who understand and live out the true meaning of being a part of the organization.

Though Wicked does not have a formal recognition program in place, it still has heroes who embody the organization's values and frequently represent the face of the organization. Account Director Lauren is one of them. She is one of the most senior members in the organization and is the head of the Las Vegas office. Coordinating with the president of the organization who is based out of San Diego, Lauren is responsible for the organization's image when dealing with current and potential clients. Because of her seniority, her position within the organization and the way she embodies the values of the organization, she is talked about by the organization's members and highly regarded. She is the example of professionalism in the office and uses her time to maintain personal relationships with clients to keep them informed and satisfied. She is one of the most respected individuals within the organization making her a textbook example of hero.

Heroes are not always those at the top of the organization (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Executive Assistant Lexi has been with Wicked almost as long as Lauren, but performs a much different role and serves a separate purpose as a hero for others in the organization. Managing the office and performing administrative tasks for the organization gives Lexi the ability to develop a type of relationship with fellow employees in that it is more based on fulfilling

organizational needs as opposed to client needs. She is seen as “the mom” of the Las Vegas office and has a much more personal relationship with other members of the organization. Being a wife and a mother, she understands and embodies the value of separating work and personal time. Being older than most in the office, she brings a different perspective on the importance of education which is demonstrated in her enthusiasm to teach incoming interns. Even though it is ultimately based out of necessity, Lexi has a relationship with everyone in the office and participates as a core part of the organization’s function and purpose.

Heroes do not always stick around forever. In the case of Daniel, former Account Executive and Internship Coordinator, the organization still has bits and pieces of his work and he is still talked about in the office. I have known Daniel for many years and had the opportunity to work with him at Wicked during my internship last summer. I came into this internship just as he was moving on to another job. Much of the initial effort to revamp the internship program started with him making his a name interns heard often in orientation as the program was being explained. Daniel began at Wicked as an Account Coordinator and worked his way up to Account Executive making him not only a hero, but a success story for the organization showing the growth and learning potential to current and future employees. His is a story that was passed down to interns this summer and could potentially continue to be passed down. This hero's story has the potential to become part of the organization in a way that will tell others more about who the organization is. For now, Daniel remains a past hero at Wicked, but still a hero worth noting.

Different types of heroes serve different functions within an organization. Whether the hero be a leader within the organization, one who focuses on the people within the organization or a former hero, they all play into the identity of the organization that is created by the members that make up the organization. Lauren, Lexi and Daniel are all fundamental heroes within

Wicked. These are the people who embody the values that make up the organization and give it the face and personality that makes it unique.

Cultural Networks. Culture cannot be established unless communication can take place. Communication, in some manner or other, has to go through a channel and when that channel is established to be used in a certain way by a group of people it becomes, in Deal & Kennedy's (1982) perspective, a network. The way individuals within an organization communicate with each other is observed as one of the building blocks of the organization's culture because, similar to McLuhan's (1967) idea that "the medium is the message," the format of communication becomes a part of the culture itself. Cultural networks can be formal or informal meaning they are recognized by the organization as a network or they are not outwardly recognized (Deal & Kennedy 1982). One of REI's defining cultural networks is a "company campfire" conducted through social media as a way for anyone in the company, including executives, to communicate with employees throughout the organization (Vorhauser-Smith 2013). This place for debates and discussions fosters a completely different type of organizational culture than one where employees must send an email to a secretary to be screened before it gets passed on to the executive, or in some cultures disregarded all together, just to have a discussion. Networks may appear similar between organizations, but it is the use and type of communication that defines the culture (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Ultimately, communication through cultural networks, in part, defines culture.

Similar to many other organizations, there is an abundance of communication that takes place through informal cultural networks on a daily basis. This communication presented itself at Wicked in ways that were conducive to the physical office space. Unlike my previous internship in a different office space, staff were able to communicate across cubicles given the low dividers.

This communication resembled both conversations you might here in informal meetings and “watercooler gossip.” This significance of this is what it says about the culture of protecting information. This type of cultural network not only blends multiple types of messages, but also allows everyone in the office to hear what is being discussed. The high ceilings and open floor plan cause echos that can be heard on the other side of the room. The office space is shared with another organization that occupies the other half of the building. Essentially, nothing is secret. This type of open communication is drastically different than the “that does not concern you” approach from my previous internship where interns were placed in one larger cubicle in the back corner of the office. This time around, interns sat on the dividing line between Wicked and the other organization right in the middle of everything. The communication with this setup was much more open which was reflected in the work.

The extent of this cultural network of having conversations over cubicles between interns looked a little different. This cultural “subnetwork” functioned under different pretenses than for the rest of the office. Perhaps it was the need to impress the staff or the preconception that interns should only work and not be heard from, but conversations between myself and Kat, the other intern I worked, with were much quieter and professional than conversations between staff. We were much softer spoken when we talked and would often whisper so we would not disturb anyone else. While conversations between staff ranged from weekend plans to client meetings, our conversations were almost exclusively about work. Looking at the organization as a whole, the picture paints interns as being somewhat separated from everyone else in communicating with one another.

The formal cultural network setup for communication throughout the organization is email. Using the Microsoft Outlook system, the organization communicates all formal messages,

does all scheduling and manages all accounts in one central location. Through this network, everyone is much more professional. The same conversations might be had via email and over cubicles, but emails always come off more professional. When it came to assignments from staff, many were communicated in an informal conversation and would then be translated into a formal email as confirmation. One function of this network for the organization was record keeping. This primary formal cultural network may seem common and insignificant, however, it is significant when compared to other possibilities such as printed memos or phone calls. Though professional in tone, sending an email potentially comes off as less personal, an easy way to misunderstand others and the easy way of communicating quickly. On the other hand, emails could be seen as an efficient, well documented and universally understood form of communication. Within the organization, it is the latter which says something about the views of the individuals within the organization.

The issue with the formal cultural network of email is that it is almost exclusively for client matters. Matters regarding the organization itself seem to get lost in the fray and do not have a set way of being communicated within or outside of the organization. For example, there is no formal network or system to alert the appropriate individuals in the office if someone will not be in the office. The week of the Fourth of July, there was a great misunderstanding as to who would be in town and coming to work and who would be gone. All of this information had been communicated across cubicles through the informal network and no attention had been given to communicating formally with anyone in the office via email or other form of communication. Frustration was expressed by the Executive Assistant and Account Executives because they were uninformed and were not able to appropriately direct calls or account concerns. I was frustrated because it left me sitting in the office with no assignments to work on

and no way to tell who I should contact or how. This issue was never fully resolved, but is a case for the establishment of cultural networks as a form of cultural building communication within organizations.

Rites & Rituals. The way that organizations bring people in to make them not just part of the organization, but part of the culture is expressed through their rites and rituals (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Rites, such as rites of passage, are the processes through which an organization's members go through as they move through or out of the organization as a way of strengthening adherence to the culture (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Rituals are the ceremonies the organization engages in as a way of strengthening the culture (Deal & Kennedy 1982). Deal & Kennedy (1982) suggest that rites and rituals are part of the recognition and reinforcement aspect that strengthen the culture and then the organization as a whole as opposed to preaching to employees and expecting adherence. Hewlett-Packard does just this with their "Golden Bandana Award" ceremony where a bandana is presented to employees to thank them for their hard work (Kerr 2011). It may seem silly for anyone outside of the organization, but it is rooted in tradition and holds a special significance for the employees within the organization. This rite of passage to be part of the ceremony for the first time and the ritual of performing the ceremony at the end of a project are ways that the organization is able to strengthen its culture without having to preach unity (Kerr 2011). Rites and rituals, though they may appear scarce at first, have a way of bringing people together within a culture that makes the other pieces of the cultural puzzle fit together.

The most common type of rite that I experienced interning at Wicked was a rite of integration as they added me into the company culture. Other types of rites, such as enhancement or renewal, exist within the organization as they do in all organizations to some degree. Specific

rites of integration included being assigned a cubicle and setting up my company email. These rites are not only a reinforcement for the organization's culture, but they also serve as a tie to the organization for the individual joining the organization. The more the individual becomes attached to the organization, the more loyal and dedicated they are likely to be based on the amount they have invested in the organization (Deal & Kennedy 1982). These rites are the first introduction to the organization's culture making them a crucial part of the employee introductory process.

The most common ritual to be performed within the organization, as in many organizations, is the ritual of new employee orientation. In this case, intern orientation began as me and one other intern talking with Bridget about policies and procedures and slowly worked up to introductions and signing our contracts in front of office staff. This ritual is one of the first things interns are exposed to offering them an insight into what to expect from the type of people and work environment they are entering. Another ritual that I had the opportunity to witness as a member of the organization was a service anniversary. Every year, employees are celebrated on their hire date with a small gift from the office staff and a celebration post on the company's social media. Though it is a relatively low key and cost effective ritual, it strengthens the organization's culture through the expression of value and care for employees.

Recommendations

Based on the observations made through the lens of Deal & Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures, recommendations can be made for how the organization can continue to enhance their culture. This is not to say that the culture of the organization should change. Just like the people that make up the organization, Wicked has its own personality that grows and changes with

different experiences. These recommendations are simply based on observations to continue developing into an even stronger organization.

Based on the values expressed both on paper and through the behaviors of individuals within the organization, it would be beneficial to record more of the values in writing. One of the things Wicked does very well is lists their staff on their website with bios that help clients and prospective clients get to know the people of the organization. Doing something similar with the organization's values, even just through a mission and/or vision statement, could help not only those outside the organization, but also those within the organization get a better understanding of the organization as a whole. Detailing values also provides the opportunity to showcase the heroes of the organization as examples of these values embodied throughout the organization. This is one way to solidify the organization's values as guidelines and make them a more conscious part of everyday behaviors.

The establishment of cultural networks within the organization has changed over the past year with the change in staffing, office space and values. Because of this Wicked appears to still be in an adjustment phase where there is still opportunity to expand and refine these networks. One perhaps more obvious suggestion would be to formalize the process and network through which individuals are expected to communicate about matters within the organization such as procedure changes or employee schedules. Beyond that, the organization might consider capitalizing on the office space setup and making more use of the ability to communicate freely and informally such as in the case of brainstorming sessions. This would further enhance the sense of community and teamwork already established by the comfort with and ability to have personal and professional conversations between co-workers throughout the office.

In terms of the organization's rites and rituals, they already engage in informal recognition regularly between peers and from different levels in the organization. Taking that recognition and formalizing it would be one step further to enhancing the ceremonial ties that employees feel to the organization. Even recognition formalized in a meeting can make the difference between a culture where no one feels as though anyone sees their work and one where employees feel the drive to do well so that they may earn formal public recognition. Any addition of a rite or ritual that aligns with the values of the organization would help to enhance the formal comradery in the office.

With a defined set of values lived out through employees as they find stronger ties to the culture through more celebrations and formal acknowledgements, Wicked will enhance their existing culture to become an even stronger representation of the organization they strive to be.

Conclusion

During the summer of 2017 I had the opportunity to complete my second internship with Wicked Creative creating content, observing the organization and making personal strides in my own PR skills. Throughout the internship I was able to work on everything from press releases and social media content to PR plans and monthly reports. Using autoethnography I kept a journal of communication and behavior that I observed to understand the organization better through the framework of Deal & Kennedy's (1982) strong cultures. These records aided in the analysis of and conclusions about Wicked's culture. Practicing the art of PR allowed me to further refine my communication skills in different types of writing and communicating verbally with individuals at different levels within an organization. Through this both objectives of practicing PR and making observations were met.

In looking at the observations made throughout the internship, Wicked did indeed possess all four of the elements Deal & Kennedy (1982) suggest make up a strong organizational culture. Wicked's values of professionalism, education, separation of work and personal time and client satisfaction showed through the actions of the members within the organization. Lauren, Lexi and even Daniel showed themselves to be the heroes that embody the values of the organization. The cultural networks established through conversations over cubicle walls and through email carry the messages that establish the values of the organization. Finally, the rites of initiation I experienced and the rituals of orientation and service celebrations strengthen the culture and the members' adherence to the culture. Based on these observations, recommendations were made not to change the organization, but to better show who the organization is to others.

Throughout this internship I learned a lot about PR and organizations, but I learned the most about people. One of the biggest lessons I had reinforced for me during my time at Wicked is people are people. When looking through Deal & Kennedy's (1982) work, initially I was overwhelmed thinking that individuals within an organization would be able to do so much or so little inadvertently with their daily actions. The more I observed and the more I worked with these people, I realized that the beauty of culture and of observation is it is all about people doing what they naturally do which only enhanced my appreciation for the things people are able to create.

From this internship I have gained knowledge and skills that will benefit me in my future career. I hope that this research is beneficial to Wicked and that they will see the value in what they do to maintain a strong organizational culture. This research could be a base for future research on organizational culture research from the eyes of an intern as a way of understanding internship programs within larger organizations. This internship, without a doubt, met my

expectations of being a positive learning opportunity in a PR setting and a unique and fulfilling research experience.

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Appendix A

Wicked Creative Internship Journal

Day 1: 6/5

Fellow intern Kat -20 yrs Air Force (stationed in Utah twice)

Recent UNLV grad - journalism and media studies

Friends with internships - Wicked actually responds to resume (same experience)

Orientation - very similar to last year

Rites (setting up email, desk space, paperwork, introductions)

Policies and procedures - description and representation of written **values**

Talk of time: when to normally arrive, standards using self & others as an example

Lauren - Account Director (**hero**)

Orientation in her office (she was out sick) "open doors open office"

Representative of new office space with lower dividers and more color compared to last year

Conversations among members over dividers (**cultural network**)

Just slightly too tall to talk over without sitting up very straight or hovering out of chair

Much more comfortable and empowering than "intern area"

More organization in program - lists of things to complete, full curriculum, one mentor

*Organization and program run by women (compared to man last year) - gender differences?

Cabo Wabo Cantina

Americana

MB steak - 15th grand (hard rock) mbsteaklv.com

Monitoring and meetings

RSVP - every 3 days to client also recording regrets

Responding to each one

SOW next Monday

No gender differences because can't happen with only women

Clients dictate more than they should. How do we fix that?

Across the board, very new learning how to deal with that

Day 2: 6/7

Set up with intern group within the system - way of separating and integrating at same time

Working with Sidney - DJ Cla at Crazy Hourse

Recreational Rollout for The+Source

Little guidance (they know I already know how to do it)

Almost forgotten about while working on assignment

Given grunt work they don't want to do with little expectations expressed in order to give "full experience" (Sapp & Zhang 2009)

Feels odd because classroom is meant to be challenging whereas the workplace is meant to accomplish the task. Cause shift in expectations among different parties when not recognized

Relaxed atmosphere - **cultural network**

Talking to each other from desk is okay even though it echos

Cursing in the office and expressing frustration to co-workers is the norm

Expression of **values** in that it is placed on clients and work rather than in office conversation

Feels similar to high school complaining about a class or group of peers behind their back only this time it is with clients in a professional workplace.

#woogirls

Sharing an office space with Motely Brews (beer festivals) - nature of one industry rubbing off on another

Whole office is full of young adults so more modern and less traditionally professional behaviors are acceptable in that no one around cares/knows any different

Day 3: 6/12

Only 2 early birds by 8:50 - choose to stay late instead because of work flowing in at end of the day rather than the beginning

Everyone comes in at or just after 9 - seems to be okay for everyone including administrative assistant at front desk

11 minutes late is not punished - warm welcome back from weekend

No indication of Monday morning usual or not

Indication of the support from the **cultural network**

No heroes made of those who come in early for dedication to work

Can either be an example of trust in employees or lack of expectation for being timely

Change from last year - no email on our phones

Reasoning: made interns feel like they needed to respond or days off

Value separating work and personal life in time, space and content

Discussions of personal life/time (ex: doing a pub crawl with coworkers) is acceptable in the work environment (no clients present)

Foster an environment to be friends outside of work - unclear what level within organization that originates from

Clipping for Bridget

MB Steak, Americana Las Vegas, La Cave at Wynn

No other plans for me for the day, nothing pressing

Did not get to have SOW meeting as planned

PR Plan for Megan R.

Beverly Hills Rejuvenation Center PR Plan for July - December 2017

Given task because coordinator did not have time to finish and assigned intern was busy

Using old PR plans as guide, similar clients guide pitches, releases and holidays to focus on

Day 4: 6/14

Clipping for Bridget

Press Release for La Cave - Fourth of July specials

Drafting with little information

MB Steak grand opening tomorrow

Staffing email

Media alert (celebrity appearances)

Frustration with client - map

Time wasted - feeling overwhelmed with indecision/proud of product

Opportunities for new staff to learn (F&B, red carpet)

Over staffed

Script/Line up

Shot list for photographer -waiting approval

Edits on PR plan for Megan

Very minor changes, mostly clarification from client

Positive tone for feedback

Personal observation that the tone is much less demeaning than last year

Day 5: 6/26

*Missed 6/19 - 6/23 for VBS

Clipping

Researching social media influencers

La cave release

Nevada Dispensary Association One Sheet

Client meeting collateral

Small personal conversation - fill social convention of not being rude and making a connection

Day 6: 6/28

Fixing other interns mistakes (hyperlinks)

Understanding that I have experience to fix what less experienced interns have done

Interesting that they wouldn't want to keep that to themselves/keep it from the intern group

MB Steak Recap:

Check in at hostess stand - flow issues

Stations around the room - info cards handed out at front

Thank you notes before

Needed client vision earlier

Needed internal meeting

Overall went well - good food and happy journalists

Sporadic wish list -

Recap for media

Thank you from client - fulfilling for client

Equivalency Reports for Rebecca

Life Time Athletic and Pancho's

Day 7: 7/3

* Half day for holiday weekend

No Bridget, no assignments left

Frustration from admin assistant that not everyone told her they would be gone

Cultural Network: No formal channel established for this type of communication

Attempt to establish through email, but no success yet (same issue last year)

Informal channel of communicating travel plans to coworkers in a personal manner

Could be seen as a way of maintaining relationships more than process of communicating plans for professional purposes

Nevada Dispensary Association clipping

Review of press conference

Contact list from legalization day articles

Panchos magazine clip

Using scanner and having to suggest looking for a digital edition

Day 8: 7/5

*late arrivals, check in personally (welcome home) first

Issues with internet and computers

Handled by admin assistant

Surprise as everyone walked in

Again, no formal channel in the **cultural network**

Seem to be working under the assumption that eventually everyone will hear about it

Could be, in part, due to open office space where easier to communicate across cubicles

Americana listings release

Based on other old restaurant listing releases

DMC List - Updating from 2014

Not much direction

Day 9: 7/10

No one showed up until 11...

Had event the night before and planned on coming in late

No notice to interns - no assignments

Called to apologize and give assignments

Clipping (guessed)

DMC list based on where I saved it

Already done in another location - wasted time due to lack of communication
Social for Americana and La Cave

Day 10: 7/12

Clipping

Printing clips for MB Steak for meeting today

Dress code note - reminder sent to interns, but staff don't always follow

Prep for MB Steak meeting

Interns not invited to meetings or events - were last year

Made it so my meeting was canceled

Appendix B

Wicked Creative Internship Portfolio

Releases

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

XX XX, 2017

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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Wicked Creative (702) 868-4545
morton@wickedcreative.com

**CHEERS TO BOTTOMLESS DRINKS OFFERED DAILY AT
LA CAVE WINE & FOOD HIDEAWAY**

[Tweet It:](#) Get your drink on with bottomless booze now served daily @LaCaveLV @WynnLasVegas #drinkup #bottomlessdrinks #vegas

LAS VEGAS – La Cave Wine & Food Hideaway inside [Wynn Las Vegas](#) has expanded its bottomless drinks offerings, with libations now available daily until 3 p.m.

Formally offered exclusively during Sunday brunch, the bottomless option is now available starting at 11:30 a.m. Monday-Saturday and at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays. Guests can choose from bottomless mimosas, Bloody Marys, pain killers, sangria or margaritas, priced at \$28.

Reservations may be made online at www.lacavelv.com or by calling 702.770.7375.

###

ABOUT LA CAVE WINE & FOOD HIDEAWAY

The Morton Group, owned by famed restaurateurs Michael and Jenna Morton, introduced La Cave Wine & Food Hideaway in 2010 to bring the exploration of wine and flavorful cuisine together in an intimate atmosphere. La Cave has been recognized as “one of the things Vegas needs more of” by Haute Living Magazine and has received the “Wine Spectator Award of Excellence” in 2014 for its extensive wine list. The 3,000-square-foot restaurant serves American cuisine fused with global flavors in small-plate portions created by Morton Group’s corporate executive chef, William DeMarco. La Cave is open from 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11:30 a.m. to midnight Friday through Sunday. La Cave also offers a butler-style brunch served every Sunday from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. More information is available on www.LaCaveLV.com,

[Facebook.com/LaCaveLasVegas](https://www.facebook.com/LaCaveLasVegas), [Twitter.com/LaCaveLV](https://twitter.com/LaCaveLV), and Instagram [@LaCaveLV](https://www.instagram.com/LaCaveLV). For reservations, please call 702.770.7375.

ABOUT WYNN LAS VEGAS

Wynn Resorts is the recipient of more Forbes Travel Guide Five Star Awards than any other independent hotel company in the world. Wynn Las Vegas opened on April 28, 2005 and has been recognized as the best resort in Nevada on *Condé Nast Traveler's* "Gold List" for nine consecutive years. Wynn and Encore Las Vegas feature two luxury hotel towers with a total of 4,750 spacious hotel rooms, suites and villas, approximately 189,000 square feet of casino space, 24 dining experiences featuring signature chefs and 11 bars, two award-winning spas, an on-site 18-hole golf course, approximately 290,000 square feet of meeting and convention space, approximately 99,000 square feet of retail space as well as two showrooms; three nightclubs, a beach club and recreation and leisure facilities. A luxury retail Strip-front expansion, Wynn Plaza, is currently under construction and is scheduled to debut the first quarter of 2018. For more information on Wynn and Encore Las Vegas, visit www.wynnpressroom.com, follow on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/WynnLasVegas) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/WynnLasVegas) at [@WynnLasVegas](https://www.instagram.com/WynnLasVegas) and www.facebook.com/wynnlasvegas.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

XX XX, 2017

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Lauren Cahlan/Laura Billiter
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morton@wickedcreative.com

**CELEBRATE THE “RED, WHITE AND BLEU” WITH CHARCUTERIE SPECIAL
AT LA CAVE WINE & FOOD HIDEAWAY**

[Tweet It:](#) Celebrate America this #fourthofjuly with a “Red, White and Bleu” #charcuterie special @LaCaveLV @WynnLasVegas #vegas #redwhiteandblue

LAS VEGAS – La Cave Wine & Food Hideaway inside [Wynn Las Vegas](#) will celebrate America this Fourth of July with a “Red, White and Bleu” Charcuterie Board served Friday, June 30 to Tuesday, July 4.

The “Red, White and Bleu” Charcuterie special will include thinly-sliced prosciutto di Parma, robust sopressata, Landana aged gouda and Truffle Tremor cheese. The weekend exclusive is priced at \$XX.

Reservations may be made online at www.lacavelv.com or by calling 702.770.7375.

###

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
XX

MEDIA CONTACTS:
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Americana@wickedcreative.com

AMERICANA LISTINGS RELEASE

Hours: Tuesday- Sunday
Lunch: 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday
Dinner: 4 - 10 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday
Brunch: 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Sunday

Website: www.americanalasvegas.com

Location: Desert Shores Las Vegas
Address: 2620 Regatta Drive, Suite 118
Las Vegas, Nev. 89128

Reservations: (702) 331-5565
OpenTable: Americana Restaurant

Payment Options: All major credit cards accepted.

About Americana Las Vegas

Winner of the "Best New Fine Dining Restaurant" at the 2017 Silver State Awards, Americana Las Vegas opened in November 2016, bringing innovative cuisine in a sophisticated setting overlooking Lake Jacqueline to the Desert Shores community in Las Vegas. Under the direction of Executive Chef and owner, Stephen Blandino, Americana serves contemporary cuisine that blends ingredients and flavors from various cultures.

DAILY SPECIALS:

Small Bites: Guests can enjoy appetizer size "small bites" under \$9 every day from 4 – 6 p.m.

Social Hour: From 3 – 6 p.m., all guests can receive half-off wine, cocktail and menu selections in the bar and lounge as part of Americana’s happy hour.

Five-Course Menu: Every night, guests can experience a pre-fixed five-course meal for \$95. The menu features Japanese Wagyu Wrapped Big Eye Tuna, Golden Beet Salad, Grilled Octopus, Smoked New York Strip Steak and Tangerine Scented Cheese Cake. Wine can be added to the meal for an additional \$30.

WEEKLY SPECIALS:

Sunday: Brunch Guests can enjoy unlimited brunch items from 11 am – 3 pm every Sunday priced at \$38. Bottomless Mimosas or Bloody Mary’s are available for an additional \$17.

Tuesday: Guests can enjoy 75 cent unlimited oysters as part of Oyster Fest Tuesdays, hosted by Beau Joie Champagne and Yacht Club Vodka. During the patio cookout, \$10 from every bottle of Beau Joie Champagne and \$1 from every Yacht Club Vodka cocktail will be donated to the Silver Hearts Foundation. Guest grillers will also be hosted every week.

Wednesday: Ladies will receive half-off bottles of wine and the entire menu between 6 and 8 p.m.

Social Media

Americana Social Media

Date	Handle	Text	Picture
Saturday	Twitter/ Instagram /Facebook	What better place to spend a warm summer night #desertshores #Vegasdining #americana @michellemcgrory	 
Sunday	Twitter/ Instagram /Facebook	#SundayFunDay more like Sunday Brunch Day! #brunch #eggsbenedict #SundayBrunch	
Tuesday	Twitter/ Instagram /Facebook	Where are you spending your Tuesday night? We'll be at Oyster Fest starting at 5 p.m. #yum #OysterFest #VegasEats @330_amy	 
Wednesday	Twitter/ Instagram /Facebook	Who's ready for Wine & Women Wednesday? *Hands up emoji* Ladies enjoy half off all bottles all day! #wine #wino #WineWednesday #girlsnightout	 

		@gigagiaja	
Friday	Twitter/ Instagram /Facebook	Start your weekend off with a SMASH (literally)! #cheers #tgif #cocktails #drinksofinstagram	
Saturday	Twitter/ Instagram /Facebook	There's nothing like cooling off with lunch by the lake #desertshores #lunchdate #Vegasdining @sarahann_miller	

TREVI Social Media - July 5-11

Wednesday, July 5



“Beet” the heat with a bite of Herb Roasted Beet and Carrot Salad featuring toasted pistachios, orange, gorgonzola, goat cheese, honey-lemon vinaigrette.

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#LasVegas #Vegas #vegasdining #vegasbound #baegas #italian #caesarspalace #forumshops #nomnom #summerspecial #foodie

Friday, July 7



Why limit happy to just one hour? Join us for half-priced mixed drinks, beer and wine by the glass during happy hour today from 2pm - 6pm!

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#LasVegas #Vegas #vegasdining #vegasbound #baegas #italian #caesarspalace #forumshops #cheers #weekend #Friday #FriYAY #cheers #vegasstrip #newdrinks #drinks

Sunday, July 9



Satisfy your #sweettooth and sink your teeth into a slice of Italian Cream Cake *heart eyes emoji*

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#LasVegas #Vegas #vegasdining #vegasbound #baegas #italian #caesarspalace #forumshops #sweettooth #sundayfunday #cake #dessert #thedietstartstomorrow

Tuesday, July 11



Celebrate #NationalMojitoDay with our new Pineapple Ginger #Mojito

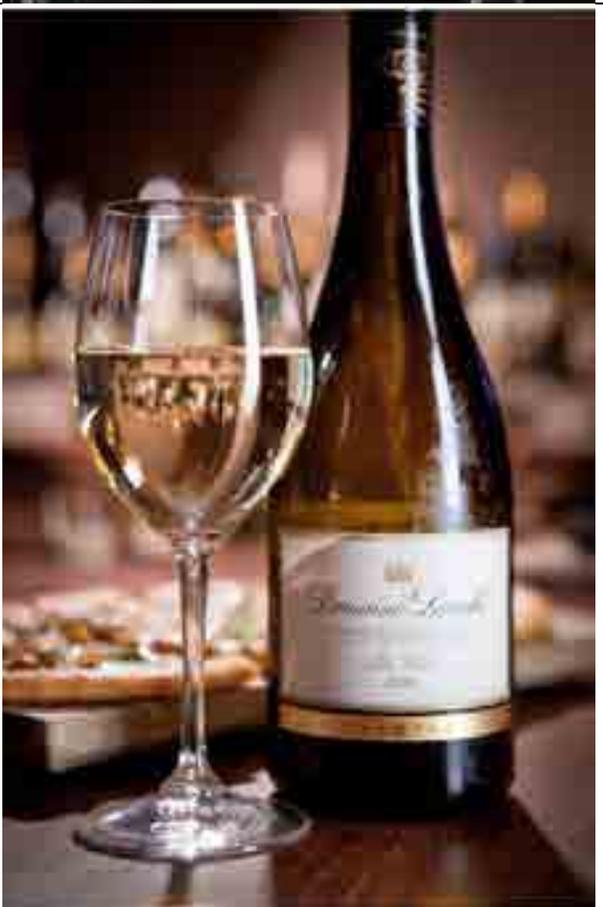
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#LasVegas #Vegas #vegasdining #vegasbound #baegas #italian #caesarpalace #forumshops
#nationalmojitoday #drinkup #cheers #vegasstrip #newdrinks #drinks

La Cave Social Media

Date	Handle	Text	Picture
Monday 7.24	Twitter/Facebook /Instagram	New to the menu: salmon with summer succotash and bacon marmalade, served over white wine bur blanc. #salmon #newitems #Vegas	
Wednesday 7.26	Twitter/Facebook /Instagram	Escape the office for mini burgers served with chipotle mayo and mushroom duxelle. #lunch #burgers #lunchtime	

<p>Friday 7.28</p>	<p>Twitter/Facebook /Instagram</p>	<p>You've had a long week. It's time to #treatyourself. #cheers #tgif #drinkup #wineflight @wynnlasvegas</p>	 <p>A wooden tray with several wine glasses and carafes, set on an outdoor patio with a view of trees and a building in the background.</p>
<p>Saturday 7.29</p>	<p>Twitter/Facebook /Instagram</p>	<p>Topped with pistachio and whipped goat cheese, these warm salt- roasted beets are something to remember. #yum #tasty #foodstagram</p>	 <p>A close-up of a plate of warm salt-roasted beets, topped with pistachio and whipped goat cheese.</p>

<p>Sunday 7.30</p>	<p>Twitter/Facebook /Instagram</p>	<p>All of the (heart-eye emojis) for this morning's eggs benedict. #brunchgoals #VegasEats @micheleburmaster</p>	
<p>Wednesday 8.2</p>	<p>Twitter/Facebook /Instagram</p>	<p>In vino veritas, in wine there is truth. #wine #wineWednesday #cheers #drinkup</p>	

<p>Friday 8.4</p>	<p>Twitter/Facebook /Instagram</p>	<p>Crab lettuce cups with citrus segments. Pro Tip: add a glass of pinot. #crab #yum #VegasEats</p>	
<p>Saturday 8.5</p>	<p>Twitter/Facebook /Instagram</p>	<p>Beet and burrata salad with arugula, topped with Dijon vinaigrette. #HealthyEats #salad #Summertime</p>	

<p>Sunday 8.6</p>		<p>Ideal Sunday views. #Brunch #SundayFunday #Vegas @wynnlasvegas</p>	
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Reports



Pancho’s Las Vegas June Media Equivalency Report

PRESS RELEASES/ITEMS:

- Summer Report Card Promotion: 6/7
- Father’s Day: 6/9

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook:	June: 1,837 likes	July: 1,858
Twitter:	June: 542 followers	July: 546
Instagram:	June: 717 followers	July: 765 followers

Print	Topic	Date	Circ.	Publicit y Value
NEON	Entertainment listing	6/22	172,366	\$1,750
NEON	Entertainment listing	6/16	172,366	\$1,750
NEON	Entertainment listing	6/9	172,366	\$1,750
NEON	Entertainment listing	6/2	172,366	\$1,750
Online	Topic	Date	UVM.	Publicit y Value
KTNV.com	Pancho’s Brunch	6/5	443,437	\$2,800
KTNV.com	Father’s Day	6/7	443,437	\$2,800
Webbandstand.com	Report Card Ice Cream	6/9	1,000	\$900
Vegasnews.com	Father’s Day	6/10	65,800	\$2,600
CallbackNews.com	Report Card Ice Cream	6/11	1,000	\$900
Lasvegas-nv.com	Report Card Ice Cream	6/11	1,000	\$900
Bestoflasvegas.com	Father’s Day	6/13	23,591	\$2,200
llovelasvegasmagazine.blogspot.com	Report Card Ice Cream	6/13	1,000	\$900
Vegasentertainmentonly.com	Report Card Ice Cream	6/14	1,000	\$900
Vegasnews.com	Report Card Ice Cream	6/18	65,800	\$2,600
Vegas.eater.com	Pancho’s Brunch	6/26	644,487	\$3,200
KTNV.com	Fourth of July	6/26	443,437	\$2,800
TOTAL JUNE PUBLICITY VALUE			2,824,453	\$30,500

Online June Hyperlinks:

June 5 - <http://www.ktnv.com/positivelylv/13-things/13-dips-of-las-vegas-restaurant-news>

June 7 - <http://www.ktnv.com/positivelylv/2017-fathers-day-events-specials-in-the-las-vegas-valley>

June 9 - <http://www.webbandstand.com/blog/cultural-packages/vegas-panchos-mexican-restaurant-kicks-off-summer-with-complimentary-dessert-for-kids/>

June 10 - <http://www.vegasnews.com/161891/panchos-mexican-restaurant-celebrates-fathers-day-with-signature-menu-items-and-drink-special.html>

June 11 - <http://www.lasvegas-nv.com/brett/061117.htm>

June 11 - <http://callbacknews.com/jackie-brett/691-vegas-view-june-11-2017>

June 13 - <http://bestoflasvegas.com/celebritys-picks/pancho-s-2>

June 13 - <http://ilovelasvegasmagazine.blogspot.com/2017/06/kids-get-complimentary-dessert-at.html>

June 14 - <http://www.vegasonlyentertainment.com/vegas-vip-scenery/vegas-fathers-day-specials-plus-new-eats-shows-and-special-events/>

June 17 - <https://vegas.eater.com/2016/6/17/11960210/panchos-mexican-restaurant-kicks-off-a-champagne-brunch>

June 18- <http://www.vegasnews.com/162207/panchos-mexican-restaurant-kicks-off-summer-with-complimentary-dessert-for-kids.html>

June 26 - <https://vegas.eater.com/maps/las-vegas-brunch>

June 26 - <http://www.ktnv.com/positivelylv/dining-and-entertainment/2017-fourth-of-july-festivities-in-las-vegas-area>



Life Time Athletic June Media Equivalency Report

PRESS RELEASES/ITEMS:

- Solstice Bliss Yoga Event: 6/2
- Hot Havana Nights: 6/9

Online	Topic	Date	UVM	Publicity Value
Ocregister.com	Summer Solstice Yoga	6/2	4,700,000	\$3,550
Vegasnews.com	Summer Solstice Yoga	6/3	65,800	\$2,600
Vegasnews.com	Hot Havana Nights	6/5	65,800	\$2,600
Orangecoast.com	Summer Solstice Yoga	6/6	40,800	\$1,000
Ktnv.com	Hot Havana Nights	6/8	443,437	\$2,800
Ocweekly.com	Summer Solstice Yoga	5/5	1,083,376	\$1,500
Vegasnews.com	Fourth of July	6/21	65,800	\$2,600
Socalpulse.com	Summer Solstice Yoga	6/21	41,047	\$1,300
Dailynews.com	Fourth of July	6/21	883,444	\$1,955
Socalpulse.com	Fourth of July	6/26	41,047	\$1,300
Ktnv.com	Fourth of July	6/26	443,437	\$2,800
Vegasonlyentertainment.com	Fourth of July	6/26	1,000	\$900
TOTAL JUNE PUBLICITY VALUE			7,874,985	\$24,905

Online June Hyperlinks:

June 2- <http://event.ocregister.com/laguananiguel/events/solstice-bliss-poolside-yoga-life-time-athleti-/E0-001-103481965-0>

June 3 - <http://www.vegasnews.com/161717/life-time-clubs-to-celebrate-summer-solstice-with-poolside-yoga.html>

June 5 - <http://www.vegasnews.com/161736/life-time-athletic-green-valley-turns-up-the-heat-with-annual-hot-havana-nights-party.html>

June 6- <http://www.orangecoast.com/event/solstice-bliss-poolside-yoga-life-time-athletic-laguna-niguel/>

June 8 - <http://www.ktnv.com/positivelylv/dining-and-entertainment/hot-havana-nights-at-life-time-athletic-green-valley>

June 8- <http://www.ocweekly.com/event/solstice-bliss-poolside-yoga-8157334>

June 21- <http://www.vegasnews.com/162421/life-time-green-valley-to-make-sparks-fly-with-fourth-of-july-festivities.html>

June 21- <http://socalpulse.com/blog/2017/06/21/orange-county-weekend-events-roundup-june-22-25/>

June 21- <http://www.dailynews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?template=topics&keyword=july-4th&profile=3020863>

June 26- <http://socalpulse.com/blog/2017/06/26/top-orange-county-fourth-of-july-events/>

June 26- <http://www.ktnv.com/positivelylv/dining-and-entertainment/2017-fourth-of-july-festivities-in-las-vegas-area>

June 26- <http://www.vegasonlyentertainment.com/vegas-vip-scenery/vegas-independence-day-events-pool-dining-news-new-eateries/>

PR Plan



PR Plan 2017

July 2017

Releases

- Announcement of Boca Park location
- Las Vegas local spokesperson for BHRC

Pitches

- VEGAS Magazine - Fall Issue - August Issue
 - Due 7/5
- DAVID - Exercise and Medicine - August Issue
 - Due 7/17
- InStyle – The Beauty Issue – October Issue
 - Due 7/24
- Men’s Fitness – Game Changers – October Issue
 - Due 7/24

Ongoing/Local Pitches

- Pitches for September: August Promotions, September Promotions, National Yoga Month (improve oxygen and workout recovery CVAC Hypobaric Chamber), Opening of Boca Park locations
 - Las Vegas Magazine
 - Las Vegas Review-Journal
 - Las Vegas Sun
 - Las Vegas Weekly
 - The Sunday
 - Vegas Inc.
 - VEGAS Magazine
 - What’s On LV
 - WHERE LV
 - KVVU
 - KLAS
 - KTNV

- KSNV

Holidays/Events

- Independence Day - Tuesday, July 4

August 2017

Releases

- Announcement of Downtown Summerlin location

Pitches

- My Vegas Magazine – Fall Issue
 - Due 8/1
- Runners World (Print) – Nutrition – October Issue
 - Due 8/2
- Women’s Health — October Issue
 - Due 8/11
- VEGAS Magazine — Late Fall Issue — October Issue
 - Due 8/22
- Yoga Journal – The Health & Happiness Issue – November Issue
 - Due 8/23
- Men’s Fitness — Fall/Winter Active Guide Issue — November Issue
 - Due 8/28

Ongoing/Local Pitches

- Pitches for October: September Promotions, October Promotions, Fall Facials, Cool Weather means CoolSculpting, Boca Park location opening, Downtown Summerlin location opening
 - Las Vegas Magazine
 - Las Vegas Review-Journal
 - Las Vegas Sun
 - Las Vegas Weekly
 - The Sunday
 - Vegas Inc.
 - VEGAS Magazine
 - What’s On LV
 - WHERE LV
 - KVVU
 - KLAS
 - KTNV
 - KSNV

Holidays/Events

- August - Back to School

September 2017

Releases

- National Healthy Skin Month (November)
- Holiday/Black Friday Promotions

Pitches

- Health (Print) – Your Healthiest Holidays – December Issue
 - Due 9/15
- SHAPE – Healthy, Happy Issue – December Issue
 - Due 9/25
- The Yoga Journal — Holiday Issue—December Issue
 - Due 9/27

Ongoing/Local Pitches

- Pitches for November: October Promotions, November Promotions, Fall Facials, Cool Weather means CoolSculpting, Boca Park location opening, Downtown Summerlin location opening, Healthy Skin Month (Facials, Medical Grade Peels & Ultherapy), Avoid the Holiday Weight (CoolSculpting and Weight Loss Programs)
 - Las Vegas Magazine
 - Las Vegas Review-Journal
 - Las Vegas Sun
 - Las Vegas Weekly
 - The Sunday
 - Vegas Inc.
 - VEGAS Magazine
 - What's On LV
 - WHERE LV
 - KVVU
 - KLAS
 - KTNV
 - KSNV

Holidays/Events

- National Yoga Month
- Start of NFL Season
- Labor Day - Monday, September 4
- Patriot Day - Monday, September 11 (9/11)
- Start of fall - Friday, September 22

October 2017

Releases

- Holiday Promotions
- National Healthy Skin Month (November) Promotions
- Thanksgiving Promotions

Pitches

- VEGAS Magazine — Winter Issue — Nov. 22 issue
 - Due 10/4
- Luxury – Holiday Gift Guide – November Issue
 - Due 10/9
- Desert Companion – Holiday Guide – November Issue
 - Due 10/10

Ongoing/Local Pitches

- Pitches for December: November Promotions, December Promotions, Healthy Skin Month (Facials, Medical Grade Peels & Ultherapy), Avoid the Holiday Weight (CoolSculpting and Weight Loss Programs), Holiday Promotions, Gift Guide/Promotion, Jump Start on New Year’s Resolutions (laser treatments and injections), New Year, New You (promotions and/or services)
 - *Ultherapy
 - Las Vegas Magazine
 - Las Vegas Review-Journal
 - Las Vegas Sun
 - Las Vegas Weekly
 - The Sunday
 - Vegas Inc.
 - VEGAS Magazine
 - What’s On LV
 - WHERE LV
 - KVVU
 - KLAS
 - KTNV
 - KSNV

Holidays/Events

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month — October
- Halloween — Tuesday, October 31

November 2017

Releases

- New Year’s Resolutions
- New Year’s Promotions
- Holiday Promotions
- December Events

Pitches

- Women's Health – January/February 2018 Issue
 - Due 11/8
- Las Vegas Weekly – November 23 Issue
 - Due 11/17
- Men's Health – January/February 2018 Issue
 - Due 11/8

Ongoing/Local Pitches

- Pitches for January: December Promotions, January Promotions, Avoid the Holiday Weight (CoolSculpting and Weight Loss Programs), Holiday Promotions, Gift Guide/Promotion, Jump Start on New Year's Resolutions (laser treatments and injections), New Year, New You (promotions and/or services) *Ultherapy, New Year's Promotions, Get Back to Pre-Holiday Self (CoolSculpting, Weight Loss Programs, Body Contouring), Improve Your New Year's Resolution Workout (CVAC Hypobaric Chamber)
 - Las Vegas Magazine
 - Las Vegas Review-Journal
 - Las Vegas Sun
 - Las Vegas Weekly
 - The Sunday
 - Vegas Inc.
 - VEGAS Magazine
 - What's On LV
 - WHERE LV
 - KVVU
 - KLAS
 - KTNV
 - KSNV

Holidays/Events

- November – National Healthy Skin Month
- Daylight Savings Ends (fall back) – Sunday, Nov. 5
- Veterans Day — Saturday, November 11
- Thanksgiving — Thursday, November 23
- Black Friday — Friday, November 24
- Cyber Monday — Monday, November 27
- Giving Tuesday — Tuesday November 28

December 2017*Releases*

- New Year's Resolutions
- Valentine's Day Promotions

Pitches

- TBD

Ongoing/Local Pitches

- Pitches for February: January Promotions, February Promotions, Jump Start on New Year's Resolutions (laser treatments and injections), New Year, New You (promotions and/or services)
*Ultherapy, New Year's Promotions, Get Back to Pre-Holiday Self (CoolSculpting, Weight Loss Programs, Body Contouring), Improve Your New Year's Resolution Workout (CVAC Hypobaric Chamber), Valentine's Day Promotions, Couples Treatments (Facials & Laser Treatments)
 - Las Vegas Magazine
 - Las Vegas Review-Journal
 - Las Vegas Sun
 - Las Vegas Weekly
 - The Sunday
 - Vegas Inc.
 - VEGAS Magazine
 - What's On LV
 - WHERE LV
 - KVVU
 - KLAS
 - KTNV
 - KSNV

Holidays/Events

- Hanukkah – Tuesday, December 12 – Wednesday, December 20
- First day of Winter — Thursday, December 21
- Christmas Eve — Sunday, December 24
- Christmas Day — Monday, December 25
- New Year's Eve — Sunday, December 31

Fact Sheet



FACT SHEET

Board: Andrew Jolley | President
 David Goldwater | Secretary
 Larry Doyle | Treasurer
 Riana Durrett | Executive Director
 Ben Sillitoe | Board Member
 John A. Ritter | Board Member

Mission: The Nevada Dispensary Association is dedicated to developing and promoting best practices among Nevada medical marijuana dispensaries as well as supporting the efforts of dispensary owners to provide high quality, safe medical marijuana to Nevada's patients.

Cannabis Health Benefits

1. Cancer Fighting
2. Treating Depression – research conducted by Samir Haj-Dahmane of Buffalo University
3. Regulating Seizures
4. Glaucoma Treatment
5. Aid in Lung Health – improve in lung cancer and emphysema patients
6. Treating Arthritis
7. Aid for Chemotherapy Patients
8. Alternative Headache Treatment – “natural, non-invasive alternative” to standard medicines
9. Benefits AIDS and HIV Sufferers – maintain diets and handling aches
10. Weight Loss and Diabetes Prevention – regulate insulin production and manage caloric intake

Facts

- One ounce of cannabis flower or up to 1/8 of an ounce of concentrate at one time for recreational purposes
 - Medical Marijuana: 2/5 ounces within a 14- day period
- Nevada's recreational marijuana industry is expected to bring \$1.1 billion in revenue and up to 40,000 jobs over the next eight years, per a 2016 study from Las Vegas-based RCG Economics.

- 15 % excise tax will be added to every purchase
- Purchases are tracked in real time throughout the state
- Private use only: Illegal to smoke in public or vehicle
- Driving under the influence of marijuana is illegal in Nevada and could result in a fine, potential community service and even jail time.
- When marijuana is being transported in a vehicle, it should be in a sealed container away from the driver and any minor passengers. Failure to do so could result in an “Open Container” fine or, in the case of minors in the vehicle, the much more severe citation “aggravating circumstance.”

Advocacy

2016

- NDA Executive Director Riana Durrett information-seeking trip to Colorado to learn about state’s mistakes and successes
- NDA worked with Nevada Department of Public and Behavioral Health to open an office aimed at speeding up the medical marijuana card application approval process

2015

- NDA hosted cannabis policy summit

Southern Nevada Dispensaries

Las Vegas

The Apothecarium
 The Apothacary Shoppe
 CannaCopia
 Essence Dispensary | The Strip
 Essence Dispensary | West Vegas
 Euphoria Wellness
 The Green House
 The Grove | Las Vegas
 Inyo Fine Cannabis Dispensary
 Las Vegas ReLeaf
 Medizin
 Nevada Medical Marijuana
 Nevada Pure
 Nevada Wellness Center
 Oasis Medical
 Sahara Wellness
 ShowGrow
 The Source
 Thrive Cannabis Marketplace | Downtown

Henderson

Nevada Medical Marijuana
 Essence Dispensary | Henderson

North Las Vegas

Thrive Cannabis Marketplace | North Las Vegas

Pahrump

The Grove | Pahrump