

AAF Midlands Club Achievement: Programs 2023-2024
1. State your club’s overall program goals and provide a calendar of the year’s programs:

Goal 1: Get more feedback from events so we have a true idea of where we need to improve for future events. We tried several different strategies to collect feedback this year, including digital surveys, paper surveys and in-person feedback to determine the success of our events. We also looked at metrics such as event attendance.

Goal 2: Host an array of Lunch and Learns with diverse speakers and topics.

We set out to offer a diverse array of industries and topics to broaden members' perspectives, encourage collaboration, address diverse interests, and support continuous learning. This approach ensures that our programs remain relevant, engaging, and beneficial to all members, fostering a dynamic community of learning and innovation.

Goal 3: Host all events on/under budget.

Calendar of Events

Date	Type	Topic	Presenter
August	Kickoff	N/A	AAF Midlands
September	Lunch and Learn	How Culture Affects Typography	Nikki Villagomez, Bernard Robinson & Company
October	Fundraiser and Auction	N/A	AAF Midlands
November	Lunch and Learn	Creating Accessible Communications	Mary Alex Kopps, ABLE SC
December	Jingle Mingle	Networking	AAF Midlands, PRSA, AMA, IABC, SOCO

January	Lunch and Learn	7 Needs to Address for the New Generation	Kyle Duford, The Brand Leader
February	Awards Gala: Advertising Illuminated	American Advertising Awards	AAF Midlands
March	Lunch and Learn	Reassessing Your Workplace	Kevin Fullerton, Springboard Creative

2. Describe three of your most successful programs. For each program, please explain how you achieved your goals by describing the event details, target audience, method of promotion, average attendance, feedback mechanism, and results.

Program 1 - AAF Membership Kickoff at Savage Craft Ale Works

The AAF Membership Kickoff Event at Savage Craft Ale Works is an annual event that is generally a success both for attendance and membership growth. We hold kickoff every year to celebrate the beginning of our new year, welcome back existing members and encourage new ones to come out to this free event and get to know the club and members before joining. To be proactive and encourage attendance this year, we booked and planned the event early. This gave our two programs chairs (Exhibit 1) time to plan thoroughly and our communications chairs time to promote. We promoted the event through our website and social media channels, targeting professionals in the advertising and marketing industries. (Exhibit 2-3) We also sent several emails to our current and past membership lists, inviting them to attend and renew their memberships (Exhibit 4).

This event is free for all attendees, so staying on budget is critical, though we do take into consideration the amount of attendees if we do go over. We set our budget for 70 attendees based on last year’s attendance, with total costs capping at \$2,700 or just under \$40 per person. However, our early booking and communication strategy paid off, and we eventually sold out the event, even after increasing

our budget and limit to 90 reservations. We can see from our event promotion analytics from Eventbrite that the majority of our traffic came in early August, about two to three weeks before the event, when in past years we would have just started promoting then (Exhibit 5). Our final expense for the event landed at \$2,946.48, or just \$246.48 over budget. While we did go over budget for this event, we felt the additional 20 attendees or potential members was worth it, and we were able to keep costs relatively low for adding the amount of attendees that we did.

We continued our new event tradition of networking bingo which included prizes from sponsors and partners in the area. We also used the event as a promotion opportunity for our first luncheon of the year, How Culture Affects Typography with Nikki Villagomez. (Exhibit 6)

To collect feedback after this event, we used a digital survey as we have done in the past. While our attendance was high at our next event which may indicate a positive response, the response rate for the survey itself was incredibly low, with just two responses. Going forward the decision was made to try paper surveys at each event, that attendees could fill out in real time, to see if we could collect more feedback for our goal.

Program 2 - Lunch and Learn with Nikki Villagomez

The Lunch and Learn series is a regularly occurring piece of AAF Midlands' educational programming, and an opportunity to expose our local membership to regional and national speakers in their own backyards. As mentioned, a goal of this series was to feature a variety of topics for our members throughout the year, and ensure we are offering something for everyone, no matter what professional role or career step they find themselves in.

We invited Nikki Villagomez, CMO of Bernard Robinson & Company, who was a huge draw for our first Lunch and Learn of the year. Part of this was due to the fact that Nikki was once a professor at USC several years before she moved, so booking her as our first speaker was a strategic attempt to engage members of the creative community in Columbia who may not necessarily be involved with AAF. Her

talk about culture and typography inspired members from all workplaces and was our highest attended lunch all year with over 54 attendees, including some students. (Exhibit 7)

We promoted the event via email, social channels and with signage at our kickoff event (Exhibit 8). To consider our budget, we looked at the year as a whole. With a goal to plan five Lunch and Learn events throughout the year, we set a total budget of \$5,600 for all events, given some anticipated fluctuations based on speaker honorariums and travel and number of attendees per event. The costs for this event came in at \$1,518.72 including our event space, speaker travel reimbursements and food. However, the draw for this event was so large we sold several non-member tickets at \$25 each, making our net costs for this event \$1,324.68. Knowing that we had some events later in the year with less speaker travel required and therefore cost savings, we felt our budget remained strong as we headed into other events.

This was the first event in which we used paper surveys, allowing us to receive immediate feedback. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive (Exhibit 9), with a total of 6 responses. While that is just over 10%, it was already a significant increase from our Kickoff response rate. Responses indicated that they appreciated the focus and topic of the event, and it was overall a very successful first Lunch and Learn for our year.

Program 3 - Jingle Mingle Networking Event

Being located in the capital city, AAF Midlands has the opportunity to pair with several other professional groups that share a similar audience and mission. On December 7th, 2023, our club partnered with Public Relations Society of America, American Marketing Association, and International Association of Business Communicators South Carolina to host Jingle Mingle, a signature event for each of our organizations. New to the planning this year though was the location, which was SOCO, Columbia's largest coworking space. When planning the event, we approached SOCO leadership to look at it not as a conversation about using the space but how we could make the event a true partnership. This was an excellent opportunity for the venue to showcase their co-working space as well and a huge cost savings

for all four clubs. SOCO decided to combine our event with their annual holiday party, and we had more than 83 attendees in total, increasing our attendance at this event by 18.57% from the previous year. This festive event allowed our chapter to reach new audiences and social groups in the creative realm of the Midlands. We each promoted the event through our respective websites, social media channels, and email lists, targeting professionals in the advertising and marketing industries (Exhibit 10).

We sold 83 tickets in advance of the event, with 54 of those tickets going to existing members and 29 sold to non-members. We also had walk-ups the day of the event, for a total attendance of 90. Because of our sponsorship with the venue, and the overall ticket sales, the cost of this event to each club was just \$50. This was significantly below the budget each club agreed to of \$250, which was based on previous years' expenses.

Given the wider audience AAF opted not to send or provide an official survey after the event. However, we received excellent feedback from each of the clubs and attendees in person on how successful the event was for them, and attendees had a great time networking with each of the different groups.

Special Event - Fall Fundraising Auction at Hunter Gatherer Hangar

The fall fundraiser for AAF Midlands is traditionally an oyster roast with a live auction of media placements, but this year, we decided to try something different. After a few years of interest waning in the media packages, we decided to host a silent auction of lifestyle items instead. We hosted our fall fundraiser at Hunter Gatherer at the Hangar, a local brewery that was also able to provide the food for our event as well. We also made the decision to try an online bidding site for the first time. Our sponsorship chair found a site and organization called Betterworld, that allowed us to list all of our items, host bidding, and collect payment for them at no charge. (Exhibit 11). Our board members were able to collect dozens of items and donations that we ultimately combined into 35 items for bidding with varying values to attract participation. Online bidding allowed even those who could not attend the event the opportunity to bid, and we also opened bidding one day before the event to encourage participation. We promoted the

online bidding on our social media as well as the event itself through social, email and our website (Exhibit 12). Changing up the event to include virtual participation and also switching from media packages to lifestyle items appeared to be successful. Our budget for this event was \$2,850. We spent just \$2,133.51 by finding a venue to host us that did not charge for space, so our only expenses were drinks and food for attendees, which we kept low by providing beer and wine only as well as utilizing the in-house food options.

Not only did we come under budget, we also made money both from ticket sales and the silent auction. In many years past, this event has been free to attend, but as we have slowly remarketed the event as a fundraiser for the club, we felt we could justify charging a small ticket fee for attendees. We charged our AAF members just \$10 a ticket, non-members \$20, and because we tend to have several last minute attendees at our events, we set a door price of \$30 regardless of member status. We had around 35 members attend the event, with an additional 6 non-members and several at the door attendees for total ticket proceeds of \$390.01 after Eventbrite and credit card processing fees. Additionally the proceeds from our auction came in at \$1,979.80! This leaves us with a net of \$543.71. While this is a small revenue from our annual fundraiser, it represents a substantial turning point for our club, who in the last two years has broken even or actually lost money from this event due to high expenses. Turning this event into something profitable again is just a starting point for our future fundraisers, and we look forward to growing this event and revenue for the club in future years.

Recap and Looking Ahead

As we look back on the 2023-2024 year for the AAF Midlands chapter so far, we can confidently say that it was a successful year though we have several more events to enjoy. We achieved our major goals by providing diversity in program offering and increasing year-round engagement opportunities with special events and in-person luncheons. We also managed to stay under budget for the year so far, leaving \$1,360.18 to put towards our final Lunch and Learn for the year which we plan to host in May.

We hosted several successful events, including the AAF Membership Kickoff Event, Jingle Mingle and several successful Lunch and Learns as well as a fundraising event for the club. Each event attracted professionals from the advertising and marketing industries, provided engaging and fun experiences, and helped us achieve our goals.

We tried several strategies for collecting feedback, and have determined that paper surveys provided at the events garner us the highest response rate, and this has now become standard practice for our Lunch and Learn series, as well as other events where it makes sense to do so. Overall the feedback from our events was positive, though we have found from results that we can always improve on planning early and setting dates in advance for our membership to make plans to attend.

Looking ahead to the 2024-2025 year, we are excited to continue building upon the successes of the previous year. Our goals for the upcoming year include expanding our community outreach and increasing member engagement. To achieve these goals, we plan to host more events that focus on professional development, community service, and networking opportunities, as always with a focus on diversity of speakers and topics to further engage membership. We are excited to build on the past year's success and create an even stronger, more engaged community in the year ahead.

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EXHIBIT 1



Erika Bordwell
Programs Chair
Blanchard Machinery



Chardonnay Ismail
Programs Chair
Chernoff Newman

EXHIBIT 2

2023-2024 Kickoff Event

Wednesday, August 23rd
6:00 - 9:00pm
Savage Craft Ale Works



Light Bites
Beverages
Networking Bingo

aaf midlands

2023-2024 Kickoff Event

Wednesday, August 23rd
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EXHIBIT 3

2023-2024 Kickoff Event


Wednesday, August 23rd
6:00 - 9:00pm
Savage Craft Ale Works



Light Bites
Beverages
Networking Bingo



EXHIBIT 4



TOMORROW Is Our Annual Membership Kickoff!

We are almost SOLD OUT for our annual kickoff event tomorrow night! Want to join us? Get your tickets now and come be a part of our exciting start to another year of amazing programming on **Wednesday, August 23rd, between 6 and 9 PM at Savage Craft Ale Works.**

We'll relish in snacks and brews, engage in enriching conversations, and partake in some friendly competition with networking bingo (and a chance to win prizes!) We'll also be announcing our first speaker of the year, so you don't want to miss out.

Admission to this event is free, but our guest list is already almost full, so RSVP now!

[Reserve Your Spot](#)

EXHIBIT 5

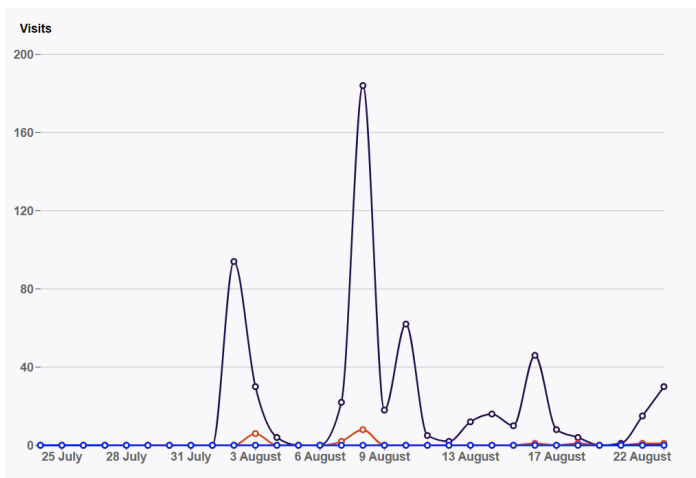


EXHIBIT 6



EXHIBIT 6



EXHIBIT 7



EXHIBIT 8

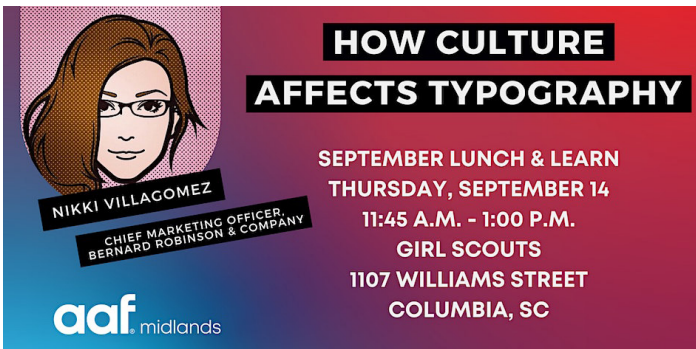


EXHIBIT 9



Lunch and Learn Series featuring Nikki Villagomez

This survey helps us gather feedback about our professional development luncheons and other events. Please let us know your thoughts so we can continue to improve these events!

Please rate your overall satisfaction of the event:

Very Poor
 Poor
 Average
 Good
 Very Good

How would you rate the presenter(s) at this event:

Very Poor
 Poor
 Average
 Good
 Very Good

Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about this event?

I loved seeing someone who was more design focused!

Did this event help you see the value of AAF?

Yes
 No
 Not Sure

Thank You! Please Join us for our next event!

More information at aafmidlands.com/events


EXHIBIT 10

 **AAF Midlands**
November 27, 2023 · 🌐

Ready to kick off the holiday season? Join us next Thursday at SOCO 80808 for Jingle Mingle! \$10 for members gets you all the networking and cheer, (ahem, we mean beer and wine) that you can handle! Head to our bio for the eventbrite!



EXHIBIT 11

 AAF Midlands Share campaign Donate Login

Experiences






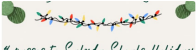


 <p>Date Night Package \$60</p>	 <p>FAMILY PACK A DAY OUT FOR YOUR FAMILY Family Fun Package \$55</p>	 <p>LUXURY CAR DETAIL AT YOUR LOCATION <i>We Come To You!</i> OUR SERVICES<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand washing• Hand waxing• Interior shampooing• Buffing• Clay Bar - pulls contaminants from your car's paintDeluxe Car Wash \$105</p>
		

EXHIBIT 12

 **AAF Midlands**
November 7, 2023 · 🌐

You won't need to be a bidder on the phone to win at this auction. Why? Well for starters, tickets are still available. And this year, the auction is all online! That's right! You can bid online this year for tickets, experiences, gift baskets and more! Head to our stories to see a sneak peek of items and get the link!

#aaffundraiser #fallfundraiser #silentauction #aafmidlands #aafdistrict3



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