



Strategic Plan

September 2010 – December 2014

What We Do

Gatewave is a closed-circuit reading service for people who are blind, visually-impaired or have other physical or cognitive disabilities that impact their ability to read or hold printed material. This audio information service specializes in information access that further serves as an unduplicated audio information portal for New York's disabled residents, bridging the information gap between print media and the people who cannot use it because of a disability. Listeners receive these broadcasts over a specialized radio provided by us. These radios pick up the signal of the WKCR sub-carrier FM frequency. Listeners outside of the New York City Metropolitan Area receive our programming via affiliated reading services located in 28 states across the country. Served by a corps of 150 volunteer readers, Gatewave supplies the verbatim reading of more than 100 newspapers and magazines a week, plus a wide spectrum of issues-based, rehabilitation and wellness programming designed to break down the communication barriers that lead to isolation.

Gatewave Mission Statement

Gatewave gives voice to the written word, enabling those who cannot see or read to access the information they need to maintain their dignity, independence and connection to the outside world.

Gatewave Vision Statement

Gatewave will make creative use of technology and talent to ensure that every disabled person has the opportunity to access the current national and local information necessary to a self-directed, productive life. As a result, the inability to read print will no longer be considered a disabling condition. Gatewave will continue to be a leader in the field of information access services and a willing partner to organizations with like goals. Gatewave is innovative, committed to quality and to customer satisfaction.

Who Are The People We Serve

Gatewave has a current audience of 450,000 listeners coast-to-coast. Our audience is as diverse as the population in general because people lose their ability to read for many reasons, including birth defects, progressive diseases, stroke, accident, chronic illness or age-related infirmity. After a lifetime of reading newspapers, popular magazines, books and other current print, the sudden and dramatic loss of reading ability can bring a sense of great loss and isolation. Embarrassment and even shame can also enter into the mix as educated individuals begin to encounter some of the same challenges faced by those with illiteracy.

Between now and 2025, the 65+ population segment will continue to grow as the baby-boomer generation ages.¹ Failing eyesight is the leading reason for loss of independent living in older Americans, surpassing Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis and other chronic health conditions according to the Alliance for Aging Research.² Age-related macular degeneration (MD) is the

¹ www.census.org

² www.agingresearch.org

leading cause of vision loss for people over the age of 50 in the Western world, affecting approximately 25-30 million people. A report issued by the AMD Alliance³ in September 2006 warns that among older persons with vision loss, the rates of depression and even suicide can parallel that of cancer.

While Internet and computer technology have made significant strides in accessibility, web information is not readily accessible by the vast majority of people who cannot use print. Studies show that persons who lose their vision late in life are still less likely than their younger visually-impaired peers to embrace new technology. This includes the largest group of print-disabled people – the elderly – as well as many of the 309,612⁴ NYC Medicaid & Subsistence blind and disabled recipients. The AMD Alliance says the elderly blind and vision-impaired segment is 12 times less likely to even use a standard phone. Access to voter guides, grocery and department store ads, legislative updates and recorded public forums along with the daily newspapers and published magazines will bring the world to our listeners. The sad fact is that there are not many other sources of this information in audio format available for our target audience.

According to a study sponsored by the National Eye Institute and reported in the Archives of Ophthalmology (April 2004), blindness or low vision affects 3.3 million Americans age 40 and over, or one in 28 individuals. The National Federation for the Blind (NFB)'s research indicates that approximately 75,000 people a year will become visually impaired; there are 10 million people who have low-vision, including 5.5 million seniors. NFB believes that in the next 30 years, increasing numbers of aging baby boomers will become either blind or visually impaired, doubling the number of persons in this category.

Making A Difference

Gatewave is currently the only radio reading service for those living in New York City. Thousands of blind, visually-impaired, physically or cognitively-disabled individuals, many of whom are elderly and dependent upon government supplements to support them, rely on us. Gatewave provides them with the information they need to ameliorate their sense of isolation and gain access to the same news, finance, health, and cultural information as those who can see and read. Many listeners live in nursing homes, residential housing, hospitals, and skilled nursing facilities; some live alone in their own homes.

Program Goals and Communication Objectives

- To solidify and increase fundraising activities including a Capital Building Fund
- To find studio space
- To develop an Internet presence
- To increase visibility in the New York Metropolitan Area
- To increase visibility among current Gatewave constituents
- To train Board Members and Volunteers to become Gatewave ambassadors
- To further develop a corps of on-air broadcasters and other types of volunteers by 25%
- To increase programming by 100%

³ www.amdalliance.com

⁴ 2008 Medicaid Enrollees, www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/medstat/e12008/2008-cy_enrollees.htm

Funding and Resource Development

Goal: Gatewave will be a well-funded operation that has the capacity to serve its growing constituencies.

Objective: A multi-year strategic fundraising plan will be put into place that will include a balance among grantsmanship, special events, individual solicitations, community support, and planned giving.

Strategies:

- Divide (balance) funding efforts: Determine an appropriate percentage of time to be spent on each type of fundraising activity.
- Conduct monthly meetings of the development team:
 - Each meeting will include a review of the development calendar, reports on activities and prospects, coaching on techniques, and will allow for the evaluation of the efforts and writing of co-workers with the purpose of helping improve performance and facilitating cooperation. The development team includes the Executive Director, the Director of Development & Marketing, the Manager of Funding and the Fundraising Consultant. The last quarter in the fiscal year will then form the basis of an annualized review of progress.
- Donor Prospecting and Management:
 - Establish systems to ensure donors are cultivated and contacted appropriately.
 - Set up a system to ensure that all donors and potential donors are integrated into the database.
 - Screen volunteer corps for potential prospects and cultivate those volunteers as possible major donors or estate planning prospects.
 - Screen volunteer corps to search for business connections and for fund raising help, including estate planning professionals.
- Planned Giving:
 - Spots will run on air continually and be refreshed regularly.
 - Engage the help of outside professionals such as financial planners and lawyers in the process of educating donors about estates and planned gifts.
 - Find a corporate sponsor for Planned Giving such as a personal planner, financial management firm, or other investment broker.
- Events:
 - Events will either be targeted towards raising funds OR raising public awareness.
 - Any event for the purpose of generating income for Gatewave must be designed to generate at least \$10,000.
 - Any event designed to raise public awareness, will not have the revenue limit imposed though a means of measuring effectiveness will be implemented.
 - All existing events will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to assure each continues to be effective according to its purpose.
 - Gatewave's Executive Director must, in advance, approve events proposed by Gatewave staff.
 - Proposed events will have a written plan that includes an event general description, the expected event outcome, an income/expense budget, provisions for marketing, an estimate of staff time required, and a projected timeline.

Goal: To raise \$3m in Capital Funds to construct new studio facilities. Planned upgrades, back-up systems and maintenance, growth in services being provided and other efforts must have a ready pool of funding from which to draw.

Objective: Create studio space to from which to broadcast all programming content.

Strategies

- Budget will provide future needs documentation including projected costs on a timely basis
- Gatewave will budget for growth and maintain an expansion plan that projects 3 years in advance.
- Involve all staff in the development process.
- On-air staff will produce fundraising spots based on information provided by development.
- Develop policies to allow for the creation of an endowment fund with the proviso that money is only placed in said fund after operations and expansion funds are secured.
- Capital Campaign steps:
 - Prepare a Feasibility Study for a Capital Campaign (4 months).
 - Create budget.
 - Train Board & Volunteers to become campaign leaders.
 - Prepare marketing materials and prospects.
 - Embark on Public Campaign.

Technical Operations and Infrastructure

Goal: Establish high quality distribution systems using both satellite and Internet technologies to achieve full states hospital/nursing home coverage.

Objective: Provide the network signal all across the country.

Strategies:

- Review alternative satellite systems such as Direct TV satellite as far as costs and tech support compared to the current system in use.
- Map out downlink sites for expansion in unserved areas.
- Map out existing cable and main channel carriers.
- Purchase and deploy downlinks to partner cable and main channel head ends.

Goal: Establish alternative receiver methods for individual listeners.

Objective: Offer individuals more choices in content reception.

Strategies:

- Explore costs of HD radio broadcasting and availability of HD accessible radios.
- Explore cell phone TV services as possible broadcasting portal.
- Expand website configuration to allow listeners to downlink broadcasts via telephones.
- Explore costs and accessibility of website radios.

Objective: Fund interactive website for user use.

Goal: The Gatewave site will be developed as accessible to people with vision-impairments.

Strategies:

- Gatewave will use the international standards for visual impairments. This requires a customized appearance, the ability to change font sizes, and the ability to convert the site to text only.
- The site will provide information to the general public and potential users, stream audio broadcasts, be used to provide technical information to affiliate reading services and as an informational and social networking tool by volunteer broadcasters.
- IT developers will aid in planning and implementing technology upgrades, and routine maintenance.
- Staff will create content and provide on-going content support.

Marketing and Outreach

Goal: Become NYC's Voice of the Disabled.

Objective: Work with NYC agencies and social service agencies to market Gatewave as the radio station for the disabled community.

Strategies:

- Provide important information not readily available.
- Work with the Mayors Office for Disabilities to become the conduit for emergency communications.
- Specifically target marketing to NYC residents
- Shape our marketing messages to encourage all of NYC's disabled to apply for service.

Goal: Launch an Audience Development program to increase public and consumer awareness.

Objective: Re-establish a direct relationship and regular feedback loop with audience members. Develop a significant marketing and community outreach program through associations with vision care professionals, elder care specialists, social service and government programs.

Strategies:

- Standardize the means of measuring Marketing effectiveness.
- Create marketing images and language to ensure relevance
- Shape our marketing messages allowing for, and taking into account the ignorance of and prejudices towards disability held by the general public.
- Create a focus group of listeners and volunteers to help us shape our message.
- Explore methods for using toll-free phone service to enhance our marketing and customer service while preserving localness.
- Develop the capability to do on site marketing in outlying boroughs.
- Create volunteer Speakers Bureau.
- Increase the involvement of volunteers in the marketing and outreach areas.
- All marketing will include both a nationwide and a local message.
- Work with Development personnel to create renewing funding for radio advertising.
- Identify all possible individual print disabilities for targeted marketing.

Goal: A narrow focus project will be developed and implemented designed to build capacity by taking full advantage of cable as a service delivery vehicle.

Objective: Explore local cable companies to provide additional means of distribution, providing rapid audience growth at less cost.

Strategies:

- As cable industry networking is important for success, establish contact with Time Warner and Cablevision.
- Create a document detailing technical requirements, general policies, implementation steps, etc. and have it available before approaching prospective cable carriers.
- Create a list of equipment and associated funding needs which can be provided to internal marketing staff, cable companies, potential funders, etc.

Objective: Once cable partnerships are in place, promote the use of Gatewave by new and existing cable subscribers to reduce the need for special radios.

Strategies:

- Explore options to add cable subscribers to our mailing list.
- Arrange for Gatewave to be listed on one of the channels in the TV Guide as well as on the on-screen program guide.
- Encourage client cable companies to put promotional inserts for Gatewave in bills.
- Advertise on popular cable channels during local avails to guide possible listeners to the local Gatewave channel.
- Solicit assistance from Multiple System Operators to help Gatewave achieve wider distribution of spots and PSA's.

Goal: Eliminate duplication of effort, increase capacity for growing contact lists, and insure an effective interface with all constituencies.

Objective: Create and implement a comprehensive database tracking system.

Strategies:

- Set up VPN access for our database developer.
- Recruit a reliable database administrator.
- The database will function in parallel with the existing Excel system.

Goal: Marketing/outreach staffing will be optimized to maintain positive momentum and prepare for rapid growth.

Objective: Design a marketing system able to maximize the achievements of short-term, part time employees.

Strategies:

- Review existing marketing plans and projects, and segment them into smaller units of time and achievement.
- Create a written policies and procedures handbook for the marketing area.

Gatewave

- Create and implement standardized training for marketing personnel.
- Consider student interns as an alternative to paid staff to take on specific short term projects.
- Hold monthly meetings for the purpose of planning short-term marketing efforts.

Objective: Maximize the longevity of part-time Marketing personnel so as to achieve a minimum of one full year of employment.

Strategies:

- Managers will participate in a self-assessment to uncover both strengths and weaknesses in supervision practices of part time personnel.
- Implement job screening procedures designed to reliably identify candidates seeking long-term and part- time employment.
- Review external market to ensure that job requirements and salaries are competitive.
- Screen job candidates for non-profit experience.
- Revise job descriptions to emphasize the skills and background needed in non-profit social service marketing, and deemphasizing less relevant commercial (for profit) skills.

Volunteer and Programming Development

Goal: To empower board members and volunteers through education and information programs.

Objective: Such education will position key board members and volunteers as credible sources of information on Gatewave's financial needs and plans for service expansion.

Strategies:

- Bring in a consultant qualified to train in this type of education.
- Explore board member and volunteer business and social relationships for outreach.
- Discuss key points and follow-up.

Goal: Provide programming that is consistent in quality and in programming procedures.

Objective: Expand the existing standardization and implementation of program development, so that all program formats, concepts and methodologies are predictable.

Strategies:

- Develop two tier program formats, one that is a quick basic script for beginning and ending each program, the second a detailed description of the program content, style and intent.
- Formats will be kept in reference handbooks for use by staff and volunteers as needed.
- The programming staff, at all levels, will use the formats as a tool to insure standardization and consistent efficiency and effectiveness.
- Develop new programming.

Goal: Recruit additional skilled volunteer broadcasters that communicate accurately the thoughts and ideas set forth in the printed material they are reading.

Objective: Standardize volunteer performance criteria including coaching guidelines for improved performance.

Strategies:

- Standardize volunteer applications and include instructions for oral reading tests as well as necessary reading characteristics to be a volunteer broadcaster.
- Use a standardized format for reading tests incorporating local news items with standardized vocabulary and narrative reading samples.
- Develop accessible information packets and tests so that blind or visually impaired volunteers can be fairly screened and tested.
- Conduct frequent training sessions (voice coaching) for both new and seasoned broadcast volunteers.
- Utilize our best veteran broadcasters to train beginners.
- Set up self-evaluations process for volunteer talent and then have a staff member discuss the evaluations with the volunteer.
- Provide early feedback for newly placed show hosts and newspaper readers.
- Have show hosts alert staff when they feel they have produced a program worth archiving.
- Supervisors for broadcast volunteers will coach those who have performance problems.
- Board operators will be trained by their supervisors and empowered to assist in the coaching of live readers.

Goal: A fully diversified volunteer talent pool will be developed so as to provide volunteer support for all operational areas.

Objective: Formalize a mechanism to build upon existing diversification efforts to create a more productive means of attracting and identifying talent.

Strategies:

- At the initial volunteer intake meeting, screen applicants for interest in working in technical areas of the organization as well as interest in working in the marketing/development area.
- Standardize a volunteer handbook, which includes orientation information.
- Volunteer supervisors will keep volunteer staff engaged in their assignments by giving them feedback.
- All supervisors will watch for leadership potential within the volunteer corps and bring those individuals to the attention of the executive director.

General Management and Administration

Goal: Develop a strategic model for effectively managing the workload.

Objective: Implement a training process designed to give managers the necessary tools to excel, and to give subordinate staff the ability to take on increasing levels of responsibility.

Strategies:

- Design formal training course of study for all individual managers and key subordinate staff.
- Managers will learn to delegate appropriately to eliminate tasks.
- Managers will learn time management and more effective organizing techniques.
- Managers will learn life balancing skills.
- Set up standardized training and retraining program for non-management and volunteer staff.

Objective: Review current volunteer/staffing/management needs and recommend an optimal staffing plan for both existing needs and future growth.

Goal: Managers will practice continuous quality improvement in both communications and meeting skills for themselves and their subordinate staffs.

Objective: Each manager will identify who his or her work decisions will affect...other managers, paid staff, volunteer staff, and communicate decisions, ideas, goals, etc to all effected parties.

Strategies:

- Hold regular meetings of all Managers.
- Hold project meetings in addition to general meetings.
- Communicate official positions and decisions to full staff after each management meeting.
- Managers will hold scheduled monthly meetings with individual subordinate paid and key volunteer staff to communicate management objectives and solicit input.

Objective: Each manager will both teach and practice the principle that good communication is the responsibility of every individual.

Strategies:

- All managers will encourage and support both vertical and horizontal communications between their respective subordinate staffs.
- Define and standardize appropriate communication paths, and distribution lists.
- Take better advantage of technology to improve communications.
- Teach the use of communications technologies so that all staff can more efficiently and reliably communicate with one another.