

**MEJO 332 Public Relations Writing
Communications Audit - SCORE**

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APPLES Client Portfolio

SCORE Association

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Communication Audit

Background:

SCORE is a national, nonprofit organization that focuses on helping small businesses and entrepreneurs grow and start their businesses. SCORE facilitates this growth by providing free resources. These resources include one-on-one mentorship, workshops, online webinars and many other resources. SCORE has an intricate website with a vast array of online resources.

The organization was founded in 1964 and has a network of over 11,000 volunteers. With the support of volunteers and the U.S. Small Business Administration, SCORE provides all of these resources to the small business community for free. Volunteers at SCORE are all business professionals with decades of experience in various business industries.

There are chapters located all across the U.S., including several located in North Carolina. Since its founding, SCORE has helped 11 million entrepreneurs to start, grow, and troubleshoot small businesses nationwide.

This communication audit analyzes SCORE's external communication methods. We are basing our recommendations on how to improve these methods by using a SWOT analysis and

extensive research on SCORE. Our SWOT analysis and recommendations focus on SCORE's website and social media accounts along with their public engagement and useability.

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

- Proficient website formatting, buttons, and headings that allow for user-friendly navigation and where to go for services
- Contact information for local chapters and national headquarters is clearly labeled
- All of the links to SCORE's social media work are up-to-date.
- Have a variety of social media platforms linked such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, Instagram, Pinterest, and Podcasts on Apple Music.
- All social media sites have the same logo, username, and color palette for user clarification (Instagram is an exception).
- All social media sites contain similar information and have links back to the website and other social media platforms
- The website contains videos and client testimonials
- Extra website pop-ups for users such as live chat, newsletter sign-ups, and a search bar component.
- Colors and fonts are cohesive among the entire website and social media platforms

Weakness:

- The website's front page has an overwhelming amount of information that may turn away users.

- The search function works for some things, while for others it comes up with confusing or incomplete results.
- Pages on the website include outdated information such as the last annual report has not been reported since 2020 and the funding opportunities have not been updated since early 2021.
- SCORE's Instagram is only quotes and not representative of the brand and what they do
- Extremely low Twitter engagement with an average of 5 likes per tweet with 47k followers
- Low Facebook engagement. Almost 70 thousand users followers and posts average 2-28 likes.
- Low Instagram engagement. Over 10 thousand followers and posts average 50-80 likes.
- Instagram does not reflect SCORE website or color palette and poor use of social media features with no stories, videos, or client photos with personal touches.
- Client testimonials are not readily shown on the website or on social media platforms.
- On the "Find A Mentor" page it lists the same chapter multiple times under each state.
- The use of stock photos is used throughout both its website and social media platforms.

Opportunities:

- Simplify the website. Can take some of the information off of the home page in order to make it less overwhelming. Reduce the number of words under the tabs, or break up the information to make it easier to read and find specific information
- Allow for personalization for each SCORE chapter website with mentor pictures, LinkedIn accounts linked, client statistics from that specific chapter, testimonials, and a letter from the chapter chair.

- The official SCORE Instagram is not representative of the brand through inaccurate use of colors, typography, and type of information and could use rebranding through real client interviews, engaging stories and posts, and client testimonials.
- Increase engagement on Facebook through interactive stories, posts such as blogs or videos, and paid marketing campaigns.
- Through increased social media engagements it will attract more volunteer mentors and help with decrease burn out rates and keep up with client demand
- Short-form content such as short YouTube videos or Instagram reels.
- Update website with latest reports, opportunities, position changes, and dates.
- Could expand mentoring services such as accounting and tax advice. Figuring out business taxes is stressful, and anyone in the mentorship program would most likely appreciate the advice.

Threats:

- Easier websites to navigate may draw away potential businesses who find SCORE's website to be overwhelming.
- From an Instagram viewpoint, the feed does not give a good overview of what the company is and could turn away potential users because its services and mission are unclear.
- With a low social media presence, small business owners may find similar non-profit organizations easier and turn away from using SCORE
- Other organizations that also help businesses comparatively have more streamlined and less overwhelming websites. This could easily encourage people to use other services besides SCORE

- Because of low social media engagement, it could lead to static volunteer mentor hiring and brand awareness

Conclusion and Recommendations:

After reviewing SCORE's communication forms and completing the SWOT analysis, SCORE does a good job conveying its services and information to future clients and volunteers. They have a clear brand guide with a concise logo, color palette, typography and company mission. However, there are components of the website and social media accounts that need improvement.

The website offers an informative homepage with clear tabs showing where users can find information. While the homepage does offer a good overview and explanation of services, it does contain an overwhelming amount of information. This is a trend throughout the website on various tabs that users can access. Although having such an abundant amount of information is wonderful, it makes users confused about where to look and makes it difficult to focus on one thing at a time. We recommend simplifying the welcome page to be more inviting to customers. One option would be to have the about page, mission statement, and core values on the homepage. Another idea would be to create a, "Why choose SCORE?" statement on the homepage. It would be useful for potential clients to understand what SCORE offers and what SCORE's mission is for small businesses.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to simplify its other tabs. Currently, each page is packed with information in a frenzied manner. Each tab should be organized in a simpler way, or it could have more links directing users to specific information about each topic as opposed to having it all on a singular page.

In order to make SCORE more personalized for potential and current clients, the local chapter websites should be updated. We recommend adding client testimonials from local businesses as well as pictures of all of the local mentors at each chapter.

The buttons, social media icons and other features such as the live chat and newsletter pop-up are engaging and up to date. However, there is outdated information throughout the web pages, and the search feature often shows confusing and unclear results. It is important that SCORE keep all of the information on its website up-to-date, and if possible streamlines the search engine results.

SCORE does have a good variety of social media accounts which helps with its online engagement. All of the social media platforms give a good sense of the brand. There is good accessibility to SCORE's social media pages through working links on the website.

One main component of SCORE's social media presence that needs improvement is its Instagram page. SCORE's Instagram page does not follow its typical branding that is present on other social media applications. There is also low engagement on SCORE's Instagram, and most of the posts are inspirational quotes as opposed to information about the organization. We would advise for interactive posts and stories, videos and reels, personal client testimonials and volunteer shoutouts. This would help users have a better grasp of what SCORE is currently working on, and it would help users connect to the organization on a more personal level.

SCORE does have a good number of followers on its social media accounts, but low engagement. To increase engagement posting frequently and considering paid marketing campaigns can increase brand awareness and user engagement. By using data analytics, SCORE would be able to target small businesses through advertisements, direct messaging, and

Instagram stories. It might be helpful for SCORE to hire younger employees who have a better understanding of modern-day social media platforms.

Overall, SCORE has a well-established website that provides all the information users may need. Based on our recommendation, SCORE should streamline its website and create a simpler layout and design. The organization's social media engagement should be increased, and its social media accounts should be constantly updating followers on SCORE's missions and work. The social media accounts should also become more personalized and engaging with followers and visitors. Adding separate chapter accounts could be one way to achieve this. Another way to personalize SCORE as an organization would be to add more client testimonials on each of the chapter's websites.