



Cooperative Education Report

Building Brand Relationships at MIC for Youth

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Title: Building Brand Relationships at MIC for Youths

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Abstract

This Cooperative report titled “Building Brand Relationships at MIC for Youths” incorporates details about how an organization in Nepal builds its relationships with customers and associates through various interactions to maintain a good relationship among all the stakeholders. MIC for Youths tries to bridge the gap between academia and industry by enhancing young minds and guiding them to dignified employment opportunities while making it possible for the youth to connect with each other through our platform. The parent company of MIC for Youths is ‘Shivam Trading and Events Pvt. Ltd.’

The major objectives of the study are: (1) to come up with new ideas for collaboration with other brands (2) to prepare drafts for new events (3) to get in touch with various companies through collaborative efforts and (4) to write contents for the company’s website and social media pages. I was assigned to work in the Marketing Department under the direct supervision of the CEO as the Relationship Manager at MIC for Youths. My main responsibilities included searching for new collaborative ideas and writing proposals for different organizations for our events, connecting with them to discuss if we had mutual collaboration initiatives in mind for the two brands and moving forward with the collaboration as well as writing content for social media and the company’s website.

Keywords: Relationship, Collaboration, Events

Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my gratitude to Siam University and Kathmandu College of Management for providing me with excellent education and for the subsequent mandatory internships, which have allowed me to enhance my knowledge as well as gain experience in such a short period of time.

I would also like to thank the company's CEO, Mr. Shivam Agrawal, for giving me a placement in MIC for Youths as a Relationship Manager. Furthermore, I would like to show my gratitude to my college supervisor, Mr. Ritesh Jha, for his continuous guidance and support during the internship period. I am immensely grateful for the friendly environment that made my experience at MIC for Youths smooth and productive. I cannot forget to show my gratitude to MIC for Youths for understanding the severity of the pandemic and letting me adopt the "Work from Home" work-style.

Lastly, I am also very thankful to my family who have supported and encouraged me continuously to give my best even if I am working from the comfort of my home.

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Important note:**Impact of the Global Pandemic: COVID-19**

Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by a novel Corona Virus, first found in the city of Wuhan, China. The virus is mainly transmitted through droplets from the coughs, sneezes or breathing of an infected person.

Considering the severity of the pandemic and the lack of immunization against the virus, the Government of Nepal enforced a nation-wide lockdown from March 24, 2020 to July 24, 2020. Even after lifting the lockdown, the Government has encouraged everyone to stay at home as much as possible and to maintain a proper social distance at all times.

Since our internship period was right in the center of the chaotic period induced by the virus, we were compelled to adopt a Work from Home work style during the lockdown. I was able to secure an internship as the Relationship Manager, which allowed me to work easily from home by keeping proper correspondence with my supervisor. Due to the situations arisen by the pandemic, I was able to communicate with other brands and stakeholders through various media options instead of a face-to-face meeting.

List of Acronyms

KCM: Kathmandu College of Management

MIC: MIC for Youths

BBA: Bachelor in Business Administration

COVID-19: Corona Virus Disease

SEO: Search Engine Optimization

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Company Profile

MIC for Youths is a transformative hub that encourages the youth to step out of the orthodox learning practices and to keep up with the time by grasping the skills required in the dynamic corporate world. Utilizing the latest technology and resources, MIC for Youths helps to bridge the gap between academics and industry by enhancing young minds and guiding them towards dignified opportunities.

Being a youth-initiative organization, MIC for Youths aims to develop foundational learning, practices and skills among the youth to make them confident enough to explore and revolutionize the corporate sector and ultimately, the nation.

Established in the year 2017, the main motive of MIC for Youths back then was to provide an open training platform for the youths in Nepal, to enhance their leadership qualities and career development abilities. Since inception, the Founder/CEO has excelled on and above the company Motto “To provide potential and professional leaders”, building a well-loved platform for the youth.

The company has bifurcated into “MIC for Youths” and “Grow Corp Global”. Collaboratively, it’s successfully trained more than 200,000 youths, among whom 500+ have secured employment in established companies. In the long run, the company wants to be deduced as a hub for youths to interact, collaborate and build confidence so that they can realize and manifest their own unique potentials in Nepal instead of harvesting them on foreign soil.

1.2. Organizational Structure

MIC for Youths is under the parent company Shivam Trading and Events Pvt. Ltd. and is led by the CEO Shivam Agrawal. Since the pandemic has been brutal for the economy, the company had to cut its losses and works with only a closely-knit group of workers, all of them whom have their own separate roles in the organization. Even though the circle is small, we tend to outsource most of the work by partnering with different companies.

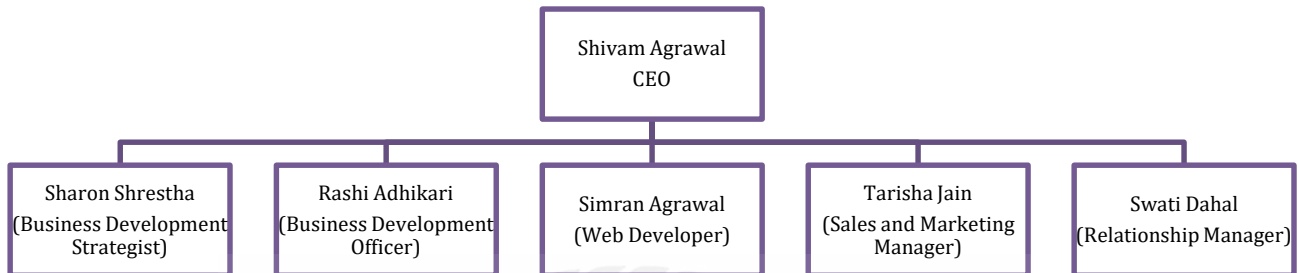


Figure 1: Organizational Structure

1.3. Intentions to Join the Company

The main intentions of joining MIC for Youths are as follows:

- To get a practical experience on managing brand relationships
- To understand how communication differs in professional settings
- To understand how events are managed in an organization
- To improve my human-relation skills

1.4 Strategic Analysis of the Company

Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Service • Great Potential
Weakness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Prices • Approach towards Marketing the Brand
Opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional and Marketing Efforts • Focus on Links and Affiliation
Threat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Instability • Economic Instability

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this internship are as follows:

- i. To understand how an organization manages its brand relationships
- ii. To understand the process of event planning in a professional organization
- iii. To see how stakeholders are needed for an organization to host events effectively

1.6. Scope of Study

This report is based on my internship tenure at MIC for Youths. This report covers the roles I performed and the experience I gained as a Relationship Manager at MIC for Youths.

The role of a Relationship Manager is to find companies that MIC for Youths can collaborate with to bring mutual benefits to both organizations. For this purpose, I had to do proper research on various organizations in Nepal along with how they could benefit our organization. By carefully studying their needs, I would prepare proposals to fit their desires and try to find ways to get both parties to agree on the proposed ideas. Along with that, I was also responsible for updating the company's website, for which I used various SEO strategies to prepare blogs and write about the company's details for everyone to read and easily comprehend. Since MIC for Youths is an educator, I would prepare drafts for the upcoming events including the outcomes of the event to circulate it among our collaboration partners and also to other stakeholders. In this report, I have addressed the process of maintaining relationships for MIC for Youths as well as contents for the website and social media pages of the company.

Chapter 2: Internship Activities

2.1. Job description

As a Relationship Manager, one has to strive to develop positive relationships with either customers or brands that the company has ties with or does business with. A Relationship Manager has to cultivate, curate and retain brands by communicating the value for collaborations by understanding each brand's individual needs. They must also improve relationships with existing collaborative brands and cater to their needs to strengthen the loyalty amongst brands, with an eventual goal of increasing margins for the company.

2.2. My Responsibilities

I had chosen to intern at MIC for Youths because as a professional in the marketing sector, having human-relation skills is an important competency. It is something that I wanted to polish up on before actually finding a job in the corporate field after graduation. As a student at Kathmandu College of Management, I got firsthand experience in planning events, meeting companies, negotiating with them but maintaining relationships is something that I never had a chance to do. Since event management is a field that I have shown interest in, I wanted to improve my communication skills and wanted to be able to maintain a long term relationship with organizations in Nepal. Upon hearing my aspirations, my supervisor gave me responsibilities that would help me advance my expertise in this industry.

Since MIC for Youths is a youth-centric organization, I was given the responsibility of finding and building relationships with youth-centric organizations in Nepal. My interests and expertise lied in researching to find the best collaborative options and also showcasing my writing skills through proposals, drafts, emails, website contents and social media contents along with other forms of communications with other brands to display MIC for Youths' goals and ideas. Even though I was just a Bachelor level student, the responsibilities given to me were very crucial for the organization to secure brand deals. The duties and responsibilities that I carried out during my internship can be further broken down as follows:

- i. MIC for Youths Brand Collaboration Initiative: We had to find local companies to collaborate with for our events for mutual growth. The steps to be followed were:
 - a) Research various youth-centric organizations in Nepal

- b) Discuss a potential collaboration with the organizations researched with the Sales and Marketing Manager
 - c) Create a skeleton draft of the article highlighting key points to be addressed while contacting each organization
 - d) Present the draft to the CEO for approval
 - e) Prepare a thorough proposal for brand collaboration highlighting mutual benefits for both parties
 - f) Reach out to different organizations and discuss this potential collaboration initiative
 - g) Set up a meeting via Zoom Meetings to further discuss the possibilities of a collaboration and hear their queries and negotiations
 - h) Finalize the procedure by preparing an MOU that both parties can sign and solidify the collaboration
- ii. MIC for Youths Event Details: I was given the task to prepare a draft which was to be sent out to various stakeholders (Customers, Collaborators, Trainers) giving details about the upcoming events that were in the planning stage at MIC for Youths. The details had to be easy to comprehend and to-the-point. For this, I would thoroughly research the outcomes of the events that we had planned to give people a better perspective and idea of what they could expect. This draft was then circulated via email, social media and even through phone calls.
- iii. MIC for Youths Website: I contributed in writing contents for the company's website. For this purpose, I had to properly understand all the details about the organization along with what services we provide. Along with that, I used SEO strategies to write blogs for the company's website.

Chapter 3: Identification of Problems Encountered

3.1. Problems Identified

The problems identified during my tenure as the Relationship Manager are as follows:

a) COVID-19 Pandemic

The biggest and the most uncertain problem encountered during my internship was the pandemic caused by the Corona Virus. For Relationship Management, it is crucial to meet and interact with stakeholders. The pandemic largely affected this as the Government of Nepal enforced a lockdown as soon as my internship began. Even with the lockdown loosened, it was still not safe all parties involved to meet for interviews.

b) Dealing with Other Companies

Nepal is a country where we value human interaction in the corporate field. So, not being able to meet personally to discuss business ideals was difficult because the trust factor was not visible through Zoom Meetings. Non-verbal cues such as body language, personal presentation, gestures and more, tell a lot in our culture. It creates a trust factor between two parties, which was difficult to attain through online interactions.

c) Financial dealings

Mic for Youths, prior to the pandemic, used to collaborate with companies involving financial dealings. But due to the economy reaching rock bottom this year, we had to find other alternatives for collaborative efforts with organizations to provide mutual benefits to both parties involved.

d) Events

Since MIC for Youths holds a lot of events for the Youth of Nepal for professional development, it was very difficult to get people to participate in our events as everything was being held virtually through Zoom Meetings due to Covid-19.

3.2. Problem Solving

Some problems were comparatively more difficult to solve but I tried my best to not let these barriers confine me from following my duties in the following ways:

- i. The problems risen by the COVID-19 pandemic was rather easy to overcome because of the department I interned in. My chosen field of work allowed me to do my work

- from home, without having to take any breaks during the lockdown. I could stay in correspondence with my supervisor through email regularly.
- ii. Even though it was difficult to attain good bonds with organizations only through online interactions, we had to find new ways to do so. For which we would tend to their needs all through out the day without having time limitations or weekend limits. Along with that, studying at KCM had exposed me to various people from various fields during talk programs, workshops, seminars, etc. The alumni network of KCM is also widespread. I was this able to approach people easily by identifying myself as a student of KCM. Furthermore, the presence of online media like LinkedIn, Messenger, Zoom, as well as phone calls helped me take the interview easily without having to meet the experts face-to-face.
 - iii. Due to the pandemic, financial dealings with companies was not an option any longer. So, we had to come up with alternative efforts to form collaborations with local organizations.
 - iv. Due to the regulations set by the government of Nepal, having a large public gathering was not a possibility any longer. For this reason, all the events held by MIC for Youths was done through Zoom Meetings. To persuade people to participate in our events, we tried to come up with elaborative efforts such as combining three events into one for the price of one event and more.

For instance, I was assigned to find organizations to collaborate with for events at MIC for Youths but due to the pandemic, most companies were wary about collaborating with other organizations. Trust factor along with financial incentives created a barrier in this collaborative process. So, we came up with an initiative to include 'No Financial Dealings' in our proposals while approaching brands. This made them curious about the ideas that we were suggesting and wanted to move forward with the potential collaboration.

Chapter 4: Learning Process

4.1. Objective Settings

As a fourth year student in college, I have acquired a lot of knowledge from my courses which are set in ways to provide firsthand practical real-life experiences. Although you can learn so much from college, there is still so much more that needs to be learnt through experiences that one can only acquire by working at a company.

Through this opportunity, I first and foremost wanted to learn how to develop and maintain relationships with brands in Nepal and ways to communicate with them to have a healthy link among stakeholders. With my keen interest in event management, I wanted to further enhance my understanding of how are managed by an organization. Along with that, I also wanted to strengthen my human-relation skills in order to maintain good connections and links in the industry.

4.2. Learnings

This period of internship was educational and useful in so many ways. The major things that I learned during my internship period at MIC for Youths are as follows:

a) Researching Skills

Researching was an important skill I learned during my internship. Finding youth-centric organizations that wanted to be involved in a mutually-benefitting collaboration with our organization required research. Along with that, writing content for the company's website also required intensive research on the subject to provide easy-to-read content for the readers.

b) Improved Writing Skills

Dedicating myself to writing professionally everyday has definitely improved my writing skills and my writing pace. In addition to website content, the drafts for events also required good writing skills to make the content easy to comprehend for the readers.

c) Communication Skills

One of the most important skills to possess in a work environment is communication skills. Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic limiting people from meeting each other, communicating properly and regular was crucial. Not just interpersonal communication, credible and coherent communication with all the stakeholders through professionally

written proposals, emails, website and social media content is extremely important. With my internship, I was able to hone in on my people skills by acquiring the correct and the professional way of communicating with people in the industry.

- d) Analytical Skills: As I was given the task of coming up with new collaborative ideas for various companies, I conducted marketing insights. It helped me to enhance my analytical skills as it gave a wider picture of how or why brands prefer to do business by collaborating with other companies even during a pandemic. For this, I went through their brand messages to understand their needs. It made it easier to form ideas for communicating with them.
- e) Agility: The basic definition of the word states that it is the ability to move quickly and easily in response to change and challenges. There wasn't a strict organizational structure that I had to stick to. It was an environment that allowed me to showcase my creativity and skills with no fixed time restrictions. This allowed me to be more active and perform my tasks better without having the feeling of being burdened, leading to perk performance at work.

4.3. Conclusion

Through this internship, I was able to understand the workplace culture of a small company in Nepal. From event management to communicating with other companies, I was given responsibilities that were way beyond my capabilities and expertise but it really pushed me to bring out my best potentials to showcase the best performance at the organization and not fall behind. I got the opportunity to look at back at the knowledge instilled by my courses to perform activities at a professional workplace.

Chapter 5: Conclusion to the Report

The truth is that this mandatory internship is done as a course fulfillment for IBBA degree of Siam University and KCM. However, this period is as much important, if not more, than the regular in-class semesters of the course. This internship period has given me so much knowledge and practical experience within the 14-week period. Not only did it show me how a real-life office works, it also showed me what is expected of an individual as a professional.

5.1. Self-assessment as a professional

Growing up, I was a very shy kid. I have had to overcome a lot of my weaknesses that came with being shy. Joining the BBA program at KCM gave me a huge push through which I was able to channel in my extroverted personality trait which had been missing for so long. As a professional in the corporate field, these past 3 months have been extremely fruitful in bringing out the best in me.

MIC for Youths is a youth-centric organization which collaborates with a lot of other youth-centric brands in Nepal. Through this, I was able to not only get to visualize the industry experience with my own eyes, and the organization also gave me a voice of my own through which I was able to communicate with industry professionals freely. This gave me an opportunity to gain first-hand experience in communicating with different brands and helped me work on my people skills.

Having prior experience in event management definitely came in handy during my time at MIC for Youths. As someone who has taken interest in event management in Nepal, I do look forward to seeing what else this industry has to unfold. With the time spent working with limited resources, we had to brain storm a lot of our own ideas to boost the performance of the company and through this, I believe that I was able to do a lot of critical thinking as well. I still believe that there is a lot that I have to learn but these 14 weeks of internship have changed me for the better.

5.2. Limitation of the report

Some unavoidable limitations that I experienced during my internship area as follows:

- Inability to experience the office culture of MIC for Youths due to my ‘Work from Home’ work-style
- Unable to have face-to-face meetings with companies due to which I had to resort to Zoom meetings for interaction

5.3. Recommendations

During my internship at MIC for Youths, I got to know the ins and outs of the company thoroughly. The company has a very wide segment of consumers that they can target since the business model creates opportunities and paths for anyone who chooses to get services from them. However, I do not think that the company and its services are being promoted to the best potential. Since the Nepalese market is still developing technologically, the promotions though Facebook Ads only go

so far. Not everyone is active on social media. This drastically affects the business' activities and is not able to get the response that it has been seeking. So, opting for traditional marketing activities could prove to be beneficial to further the brand name and its reach to the masses. So, I would recommend promoting to the larger population via traditional forms of marketing.

As for maintaining relationships with stakeholders, MIC for Youths must move swiftly to fulfill the needs of their collaborative brands rather than taking days to come up with offerings and decisions, in order to keep them captivated by what the company is offering. Time management, swiftness and activeness while responding to clients must be opted by the company to maintain strong relationships.



Annex

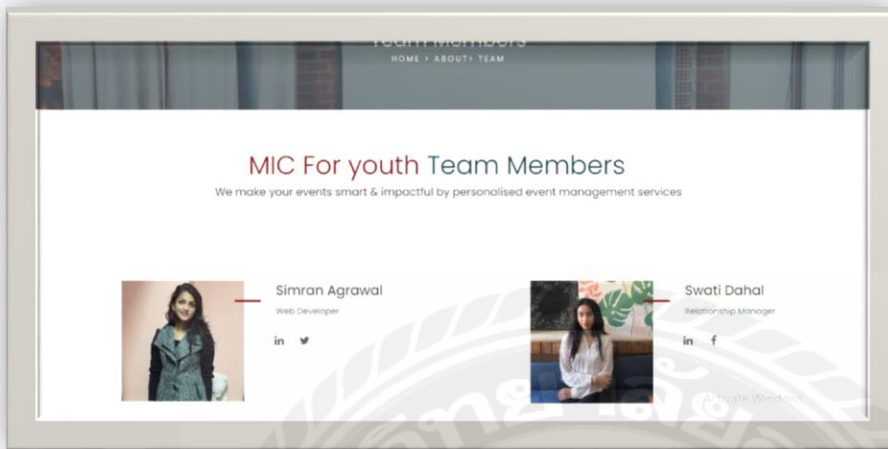


Figure 2: MIC for Youths Website

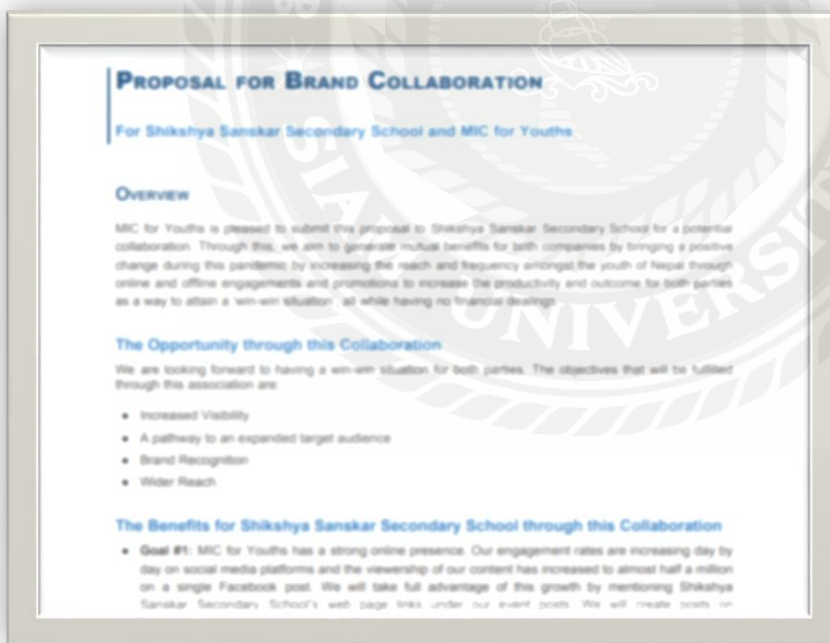


Figure 3: Proposal for Brand Collaboration Documentation

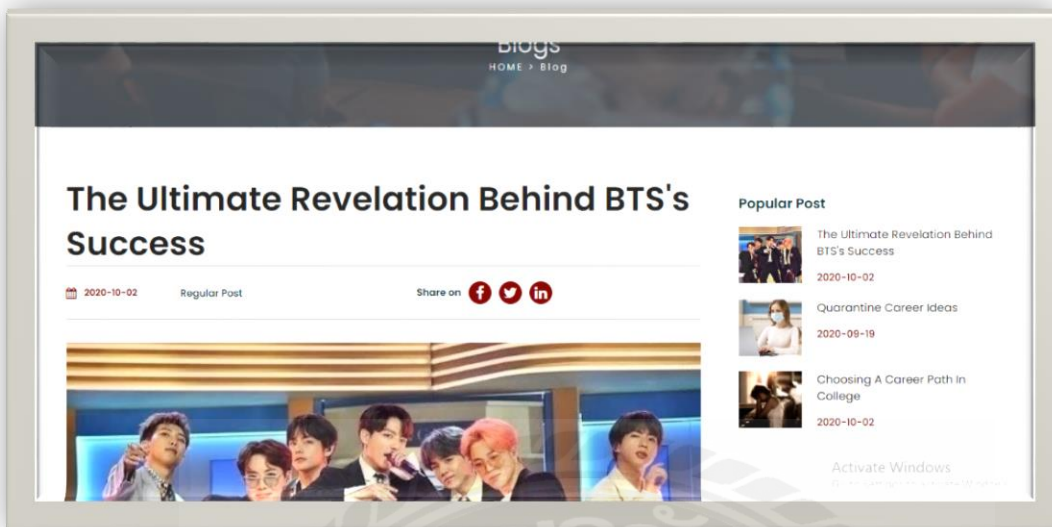


Figure 4: Blogs in MIC for Youths Website



Figure 5: Event Flyer for Social Media Sites



Figure 6: Customer Feedback from an Event



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