



ALEXANDRIA YMCA

SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING OPERATIONS RESEARCH EVENT

**Alexandria Area High School
4300 Pioneer Rd, Alexandria, MN 56308
April 25, 2026**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The Alexandria, Minnesota YMCA is a **nonprofit organization** that fosters a healthier, more connected community by ensuring access to wellness programs for all. The YMCA serves the community by providing **swimming lessons, childcare, fitness facilities, and group classes**, made possible by the support of approximately **700 donors and 7,500 members**. Through hard intentionality and perseverance, the YMCA has become an integral part of many community members' lives. Providing more than just a gym membership, the YMCA is a place where people of all ages can learn, grow, and have access to support for healthy living and connectedness.

Alexandria YMCA Mission:

“To promote healthy spirit, mind, and body for all, and to put Christian principles into practice through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.”

Figure 1.1 : Alexandria YMCA Mission Statement

Purpose

JDL CONSULTING FIRM



Figure 1.2 : JDL Consulting Firm

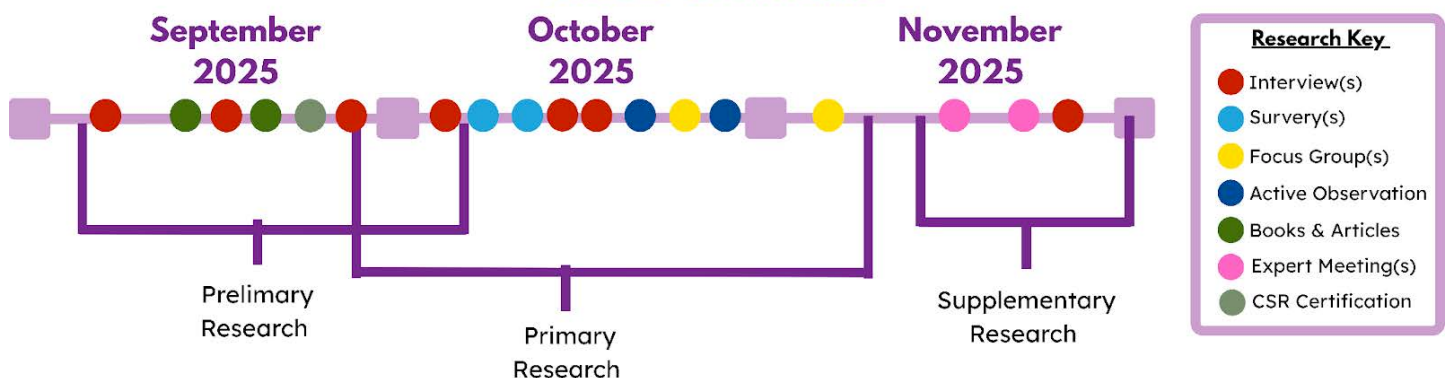
JDL Consulting, led by Campbell Jenzen (Director of Creative Development), Lillian Dutton (Director of Marketing), and Jacob Loween (Director of Communications), was hired by Jackie Peters, Director of the Alexandria YMCA, to grow the YMCA's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) approach. The YMCA has a strong social impact, but seeks to **expand awareness of its impact within the community**. Increased exposure would **facilitate member growth** and address **donor stagnation**.

Research Methods

To ensure comprehensive and strategic findings, JDL Consulting developed a structured **three-phase research approach** aligned with its three primary objectives. As illustrated below, the research was divided into **Preliminary, Primary, and Supplementary phases** with a corresponding research timeline.



Research Timeline



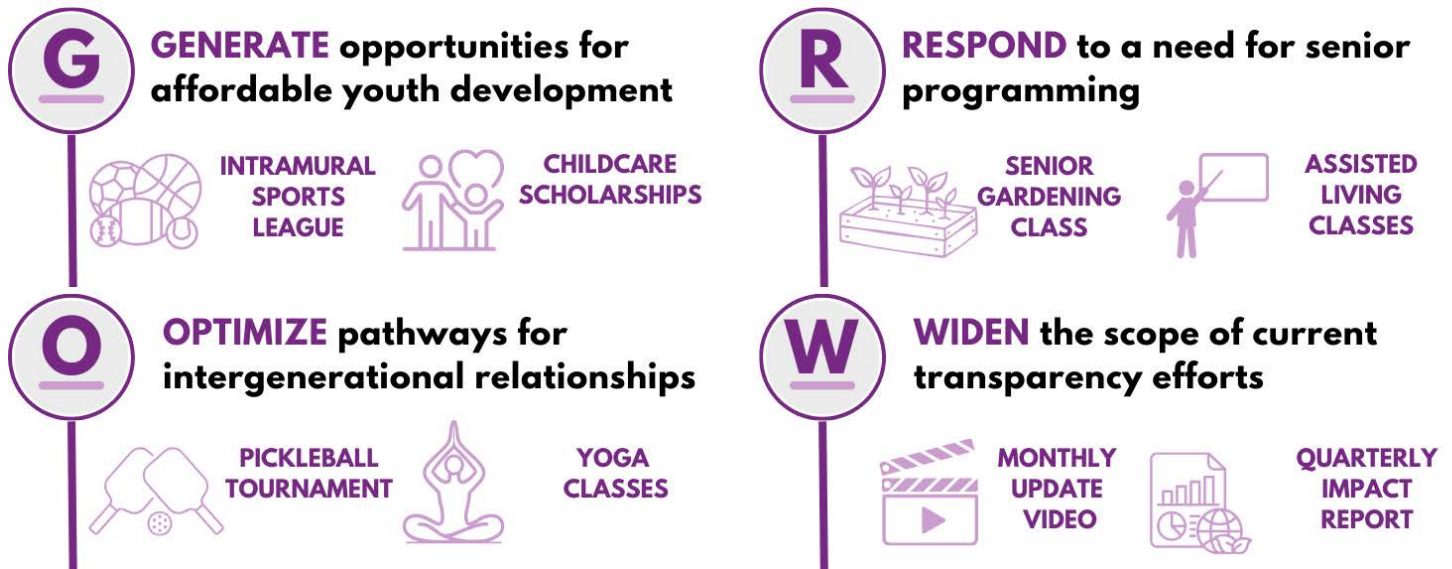
Findings and Conclusions

Core Findings	Method(s): Survey and Interview(s) “ We offer financial assistance because our members have emphasized this is important to them. <i>-Jackie Peters</i> ” 78% of members said health and wellness is both why they joined and what they value most at the YMCA.	Method(s): Focus Group and Interview(s) Q: “ What programs could be added at the YMCA? ” A: “ There are 2,700 senior members, but minimal programming for this age group. ”	Method(s): Focus Group and Interview(s) “ As seniors, we want to feel valued, make meaningful connections, and give back. ” “ At Alexandria Industries, our customers appreciate the opportunity to participate in our CSR activities. <i>-Jon Olson</i> ”	Method(s): Observation and Interview(s) Q: “ What do you think could’ve been improved at the YMCA? ” A: “ While the YMCA plays a vital role in supporting our community, much of our impact goes unnoticed. ”
	Conclusion #1 Members feel opportunities for healthy living should be available for all.	Conclusion #2 An opportunity exists to fill a gap in senior programming.	Conclusion #3 CSR is most effective when driven by community needs.	Conclusion #4 Improvements are needed in promoting the YMCA CSR efforts.

Proposed Strategic Plan

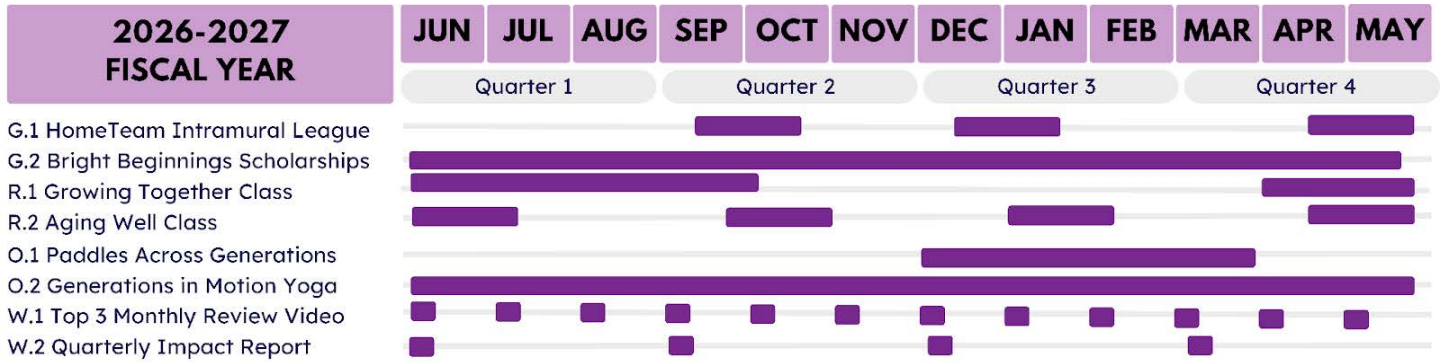
The **GROW the Future** campaign was initiated to expand the YMCA’s CSR efforts. Designed by JDL Consulting, the campaign features the acronym **GROW**, which stands for the four objectives and eight activities that closely correlate to the four main research conclusions. The **GROW** campaign will run within the 2026/2027 fiscal year from June 1st to May 31st.

GROW THE FUTURE



The **GROW the Future** campaign focuses on expanding access, strengthening community connections, and increasing transparency. The first objective creates affordable opportunities for youth through an intramural sports league and childcare scholarships, helping families from diverse economic backgrounds participate. The second objective addresses senior needs by offering gardening classes and nursing home visits that promote healthy living and relationship-building. The third objective strengthens intergenerational connections through activities such as pickleball tournaments and yoga sessions, bringing varying age groups together. The final objective increases transparency by sharing monthly videos and quarterly reports to highlight impact. **Together, these initiatives will work to increase the community awareness of the impact the YMCA makes, while also building a healthier, more connected community and attracting long-term members and donors.**

Activity Timeline



Key Performance Indicators

Following the completion of the **GROW the Future** campaign, each activity will be evaluated using a key performance indicator (KPI) to measure its success. These **metrics are categorized into poor, good, and excellent performance levels** based on specific numerical benchmarks. After each activity is completed, results are analyzed using this scale to determine overall effectiveness and impact.



Proposed Budget and ROI



Outcomes

The **GROW the Future** campaign will create an industry-leading approach to the Alexandria YMCA's CSR efforts. By improving affordable access for all, expanding senior activities, optimizing pathways for intergenerational relationships, and widening the scope of transparency, the YMCA will reach a broader **demographic of potential members and donors**. These efforts will strengthen engagement throughout Alexandria and nearby communities. By reaching a wider audience, the YMCA will **increase donations and membership revenue by \$63,208**. In the plan's first year, the **YMCA will achieve an ROI of 148%**; in subsequent years, it will **increase to 196% and 239%** as activities reach more potential customers and donors. By implementing the **GROW the Future** campaign, the Alexandria YMCA will invest in research-driven strategies to drive financial growth among donors and new members, while expanding its positive CSR impact across the community.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Description of the business or organization

Company Overview

Founded in June 2010, the Alexandria, Minnesota YMCA began as a family wellness and fitness center and has since become a community building block. The Alexandria YMCA is a **501(c)(3) nonprofit organization** dedicated to strengthening the community through its mission-based initiatives. The mission of the YMCA is to **“Promote healthy spirit, mind, and body for all, and to put Christian principles into practice through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.”** The Alexandria YMCA offers youth sports, swim lessons, summer camps, childcare, and adult fitness programs designed to support people of all ages and backgrounds.



Figure 2.1 : Alexandria, MN YMCA

Competitive Advantages

Located in Douglas County, the Alexandria YMCA has many unique advantages that set it apart from other fitness and wellness centers around the community. A perfect example is the YMCA's ability to create a place where individuals of all ages can participate in over **50 programs**. These programs are designed to promote health, inclusion, and community engagement, serving members from early childhood through adulthood. Additionally, the YMCA provides a safe environment where members can form **lifelong friendships** and **spend time with fellow YMCA members**. The YMCA strives to create a positive, engaging, and welcoming environment for every individual who walks through the door, ensuring a supportive experience for all its members. Executive Director Jackie Peters emphasizes that the YMCA is more than a traditional gym; it plays an essential role in the lives of many members (Figure 2.2).



“ The YMCA is more than just a gym or a pool; it’s a life-changing place that strengthens people, supports families, and provides what’s truly essential for living. – Jackie Peters ”

Figure 2.2 : Quote from Jackie Peters, Alexandria YMCA Executive Director

Alexandria YMCA 2025 Community Impact

Serving **7,453 members in 2025**, the YMCA is committed to making a positive impact on Alexandria's community. The YMCA positively impacts individuals by creating an environment that encourages personal growth and strengthens the community around them. The YMCA also provides swimming lessons for 886 youths and serves as a primary meeting location for a number of youth groups to gather and explore their faith. **Donations from generous supporters throughout the community enable the YMCA to distribute \$217,573 in activity scholarships in 2025.** Over **415 memberships**, both family and individual, receive up to 100% payment help, decreasing the financial burden on families who wish to prioritize an active lifestyle. Additionally, these donations reduce daycare costs, making them affordable for over **339 children**. Looking ahead, the Alexandria YMCA continues to focus on expanding youth programming, increasing scholarship accessibility, and strengthening partnerships within Douglas County. By investing in future generations and prioritizing inclusivity, the YMCA remains committed to long-term community growth. Taken together, these outcomes illustrate the YMCA's comprehensive approach to supporting community health and accessibility.



Figure 2.3: 2025 Community Impact

B. Description of the target market (demographics and psychographics)

Geographic

The Alexandria Area YMCA is **located approximately two miles from downtown Alexandria**. Alexandria serves as a central point for many smaller towns and communities throughout the area. As of 2023, the **City of Alexandria has a population of 14,597, and the surrounding area of Douglas County has a population of 39,668** (Douglas County Factbook, 2025). Alexandria is located in west-central Minnesota along Interstate 94, about halfway between Minneapolis–St. Paul and Fargo. **The community is surrounded by more than 300 lakes, making it a popular destination for secondary residents and vacationers during its summer months.** This unique location combines small-town living with tourism, manufacturing, and agriculture, making the YMCA a central gathering place for year-round residents and seasonal visitors.



Figure 2.4 : Alexandria, MN YMCA

Demographics and Psychographics

While Douglas County's population is evenly distributed across age groups, the YMCA's membership is more skewed. Services such as swimming lessons, the child watch center, and open gym attract families looking to enhance their children's well-being while fostering community engagement. **Families comprise a significant portion, with around 65% of households in Douglas County being family households** (Point2Homes). At the same time, several **individual memberships are held by young adults ages 18-29** who often focus on self-improvement and tend to use the gym and cardio machines rather than participate in programs or classes. Additionally, a substantial share of the population consists of retirees. **The YMCA's membership makeup reflects this growing senior population, with over 2,700 members ages 65 and older.**

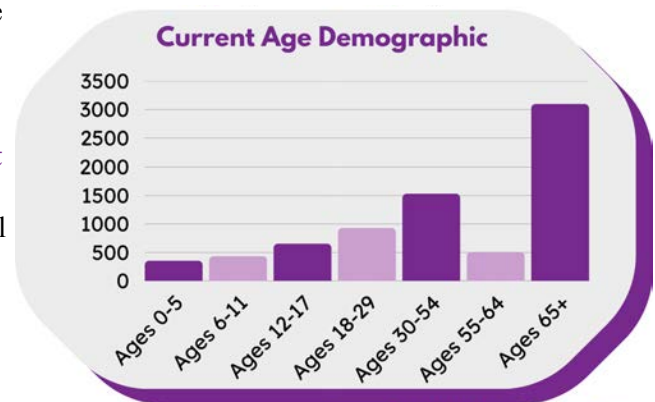


Figure 2.5 : YMCA Age Demographic

In addition to staying active, many older members come to the YMCA seeking a sense of fellowship and community. The community's varied demographics and psychographics drive demand for programming that appeals to all ages.

Ideal Customer Profile

The ideal Alexandria YMCA member is someone who values **both physical wellness and community connection**. Whether participating in youth programs, group fitness classes, or social activities, members benefit from an environment that promotes healthy lifestyles, intergenerational interaction, and meaningful relationships. By catering to the unique needs of families, young adults, and seniors, the YMCA fosters engagement and strengthens community well-being.



Figure 2.6: Ideal Member

Ideal Donor Profile



Figure 2.7: Ideal Donor

The ideal donor profile for the Alexandria YMCA includes community-minded individuals, families, and local business leaders who **value health, youth development, and fostering meaningful relationships**. Potential donors are motivated by the YMCA's ability to provide opportunities for all individuals, regardless of economic background, as well as healthy living practices available to all. Individual donors are often middle- to high-income individuals or families looking to support an organization that frequently affects them or their close friends and family. The YMCA attracts businesses within the Alexandria area that benefit from a healthy, connected community and want their brand associated with family values, wellness, and inclusion.

C. Overview of the business or organization's current business strategy relating to corporate social responsibility initiatives

With one of its **three established pillars being Social Responsibility**, it is clear the organization already had a solid foundation of CSR practices. Jackie Peters (Executive Director of the Alexandria YMCA) highlighted a key misconception about Corporate Social Responsibility in nonprofits versus for-profit businesses. She explained that, unlike a typical company that redistributes profits, the **YMCA receives donations from the community and reinvests them in programs and services that benefit the community**. YMCA's approach shows that CSR is not an added initiative, but a core function of how the organization serves and strengthens its community.



Figure 2.8 : Alexandria YMCA Executive Director, Jackie Peters

Environmental Initiatives

One of the YMCA's **primary goals** is to be a **good steward of financial and physical resources**. As a result, the YMCA continues to **strive for greener, more sustainable practices**. A notable example is the YMCA's decision to utilize a **Thermal Energy System (TES) for cooling the building**. The system creates ice during non-peak hours while energy costs are low. Ice is then used to cool the building during peak hours, thereby lowering energy costs. Ultimately, the TES system reflects the YMCA's **commitment to saving money, conserving resources, and supporting a greener community**.

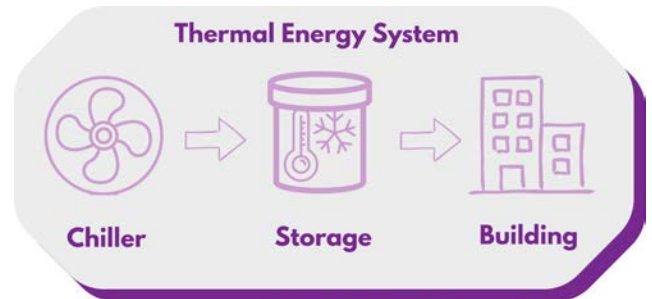


Figure 2.9: Thermal Energy System

Social Impact Programs

The YMCA's central focus is fostering relationships with members **and non-members** throughout the community. With 7,453 members, 886 children in swimming lessons, and more than 339 children in childcare, it can be challenging to keep costs low. As a result, the YMCA **raises over \$200,000 annually to keep costs within reason**. The primary priority is to **keep childcare costs manageable for young families** throughout the area. The YMCA also gives back to the community by hosting events such as the annual Turkey Day 5K run and Blood Drives, hosting youth groups, and offering trial classes without a membership, which encourages families throughout the community to engage in exercise.



Figure 2.10: Current Social Impact Initiatives

Ethical Sourcing and Manufacturing

Maintaining a low employee turnover rate is a primary goal for the YMCA's leadership team. To achieve this, the organization **emphasizes ethical labor standards**. These standards include **prioritizing fair wages, maintaining a safe and healthy work environment, ensuring all employees work reasonable hours, and providing additional benefits, such as access to all YMCA facilities nationwide**. Additionally, the YMCA encourages professional growth by supporting and hosting programs, such as extended employee training, to help employees gain the confidence and skills necessary to provide excellent service to members. Where possible, the **YMCA sources products and services locally**, strengthening community businesses while reducing its environmental footprint.

Diversity and Inclusion

The YMCA is always seeking innovative approaches to provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds. The idea that everyone is welcome is deeply ingrained in the YMCA's culture, among both members and employees, with the slogan, **“The Y is for all,”** being featured across the website and throughout the building. Providing opportunities for all also entails **facilitating financial diversity**. As a result, **scholarships are provided to individuals or families in need, ensuring that finances never prevent anyone from joining**. In this way, the YMCA's commitment to accessibility ensures its doors remain open to everyone.

III. RESEARCH METHODS USED IN THE STUDY

A. Description and rationale of research methodologies selected to conduct the research study

JDL Consulting was hired to help enhance the YMCA's current Corporate Social Responsibility practices. The firm comprises three members: Campbell Jenzen, Lillian Dutton and Jacob Loween. Each member possesses unique strengths, which set JDL Consulting Firm apart from its competitors. **Jenzen was assigned the role of Director of Creative Development, Dutton the role of Director of Marketing, and Loween was allocated the role of Director of Communications** to ensure the best potential outcomes within JDL Consulting Firm.



Figure 3.1 : JDL Consulting Firm

Three-Phase Research

Layered research was essential in identifying effective strategies to strengthen Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) at the Alexandria YMCA for the 2026–2027 fiscal year, running from June 1, 2026, to May 31, 2027. To ensure comprehensive and strategic findings, JDL Consulting developed a structured **three-phase research approach** aligned with its three primary objectives. As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the research was divided into **Preliminary, Primary, and Supplementary** phases.

The first phase focused on developing a deep **understanding of CSR** best practices and industry standards. The second phase evaluated the YMCA's **current CSR initiatives, including employee and customer perceptions** of existing operations. Finally, the third phase examined **emerging CSR trends** and assessed how the YMCA can adapt to remain a leading and innovative force within the fitness industry.

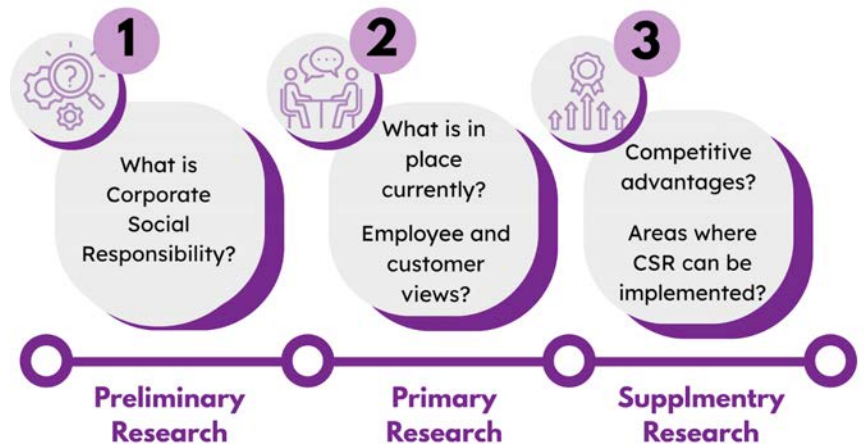


Figure 3.2 : Three-Phase Research

Preliminary Research

Table 1: Preliminary Research Methods

Preliminary Research	Description	Rationale
1- Articles/Books 1.1- The A-Z of Corporate Social Responsibility 1.2- Corporate Social Responsibility through an Economic Lens	1.1- Read a book detailing how CSR is becoming increasingly mainstream in today's business world. The book outlined 339 CSR-related terms and provided cross-references and context for each. 1.2- Read an article focusing specifically on the economic effects of CSR and the impact of different activities on a company's financials.	1.1- Led to the firm gaining a better base understanding of what CSR is and how it can be used strategically. 1.2- Allowed the firm to observe industry standards surrounding CSR, as well as generate ideas to be implemented at the YMCA.
2- Corporate Analysis 2.1- National YMCA Database Review	2.1- Studied the National YMCA database to observe qualitative and quantitative statistics surrounding membership information at the YMCA.	2.1- Helped the firm in understanding the demographics and psychographics of both current members and the surrounding community.
3- CSR Class 3.1- ISO 26000 - Business Practices for Corporate Social Responsibility	3.1- Participated in a class centered around the fundamentals of CSR practices and how they can be utilized in the workforce.	3.1- Allowed the firm to dive deeper into relevant CSR practices nationally. Additionally, enabled the firm to become CPD certified.

Primary Research

Table 2: Primary Research Methods

Primary Research	Description	Rationale
4- Surveys 4.1- Employee Survey 4.2- Member Survey	4.1, 4.2,- Created a survey on Google Forms, which was sent to all Alexandria YMCA members and employees, and select community members.	4.1, 4.2,- Determine employees, YMCA members, and community members' current knowledge and views of CSR strategies at the Alexandria YMCA.
5- Focus Groups 5.1- Mothers 5.2- Retirees	5.1- Held with five mothers who were all members at the Alexandria YMCA. 5.2- Held a focus group with a retired friend group.	5.1,5.2- Obtained honest feedback from real-life members who have a variety of perspectives surrounding CSR practices at the YMCA.
6- Interviews 6.1- Jackie Peters 6.2- Greg Gack 6.3-David Kjos and Larry Ortloff	6.1- Interviewed Jackie Peter, Executive Director of Alexandria, MN YMCA. 6.2- Interviewed Greg Gack, Executive Director of St. Cloud, MN YMCA. 6.3- Interviewed David Kjos and Larry Ortloff, Founders of the Alexandria YMCA.	6.1, 6.2- Gained insight into current values/goals pertaining to CSR practices being carried out at both the Alexandria YMCA, as well as a similar St. Cloud location. 6.3- Discovered what donors value most and gained an understanding of the original challenges and goals behind the YMCA's founding.
7- Active Observation 7.1- Capital Campaign Meeting	7.1- Attended a meeting of donors and volunteers heavily involved in fundraising and community outreach.	7.1 - Gained an understanding of what volunteers are doing currently in regards to CSR, as well as determine what they feel needs to be improved.

Surveys

A Google Form survey was distributed to all current **employees and members** of the Alexandria YMCA to gather quantitative data on employee and member **perspectives regarding current CSR operations and individual values**. The survey was distributed in two ways. Jeni Sorensen, Member Experience Director at the YMCA, **emailed the survey directly to individual members**. At the same time, Jackie Peters **sent it to employees via Paylocity**, the primary internal communication channel. **QR codes were also posted around the facility**. The survey included **ranking metrics, fixed response options, and short-answer questions** to capture current views and values on CSR.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted with YMCA members representing the target market: **five mothers with children of varying ages and another with retired YMCA members**. Participants discussed their member experiences and shared ideas for potential CSR improvements. These sessions allowed the firm to **gain direct insight into members' perspectives on CSR practices**. A third focus group was held with the Alexandria YMCA **leadership team, composed of donors and volunteers**. Participants discussed current CSR strategies that were going well and others that had room for growth. This focus group allowed the firm to hear directly from volunteers who invest time in the YMCA.

Interviews

Jackie Peters, Executive Director of the Alexandria YMCA, met with JDL Consulting five times throughout the project. Discussions centered on **current CSR practices, future goals, and challenges hindering progress**. These conversations provided a clearer understanding of the YMCA's current position and long-term vision.

Greg Gack, Executive Director of the St. Cloud YMCA, met with JDL Consulting via Zoom. Discussions focused on **CSR initiatives at a larger scale, as the St. Cloud YMCA serves roughly three times more members**. This offered valuable insight into how CSR strategies can be effectively scaled across larger communities.

David Kjos and Larry Ortloff, both founders of the Alexandria YMCA, met with JDL Consulting once during the project. Discussion focused on **key challenges when founding and fundraising for the YMCA**. The firm also questioned Kjos and Ortloff about the current donor status and the gaps they see that need to be filled at the YMCA.

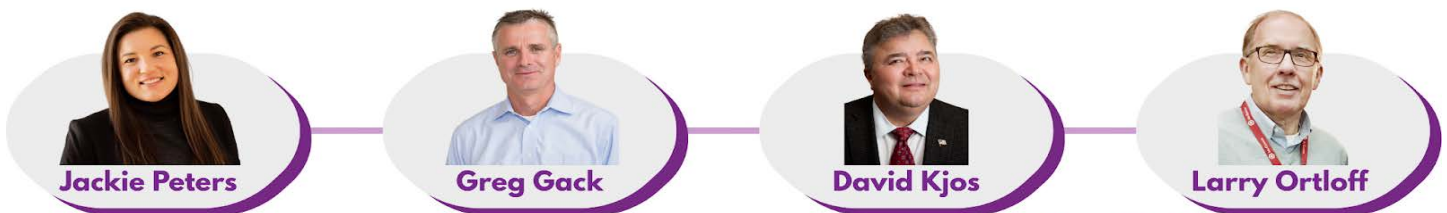


Figure 3.3 : Interview Correspondents

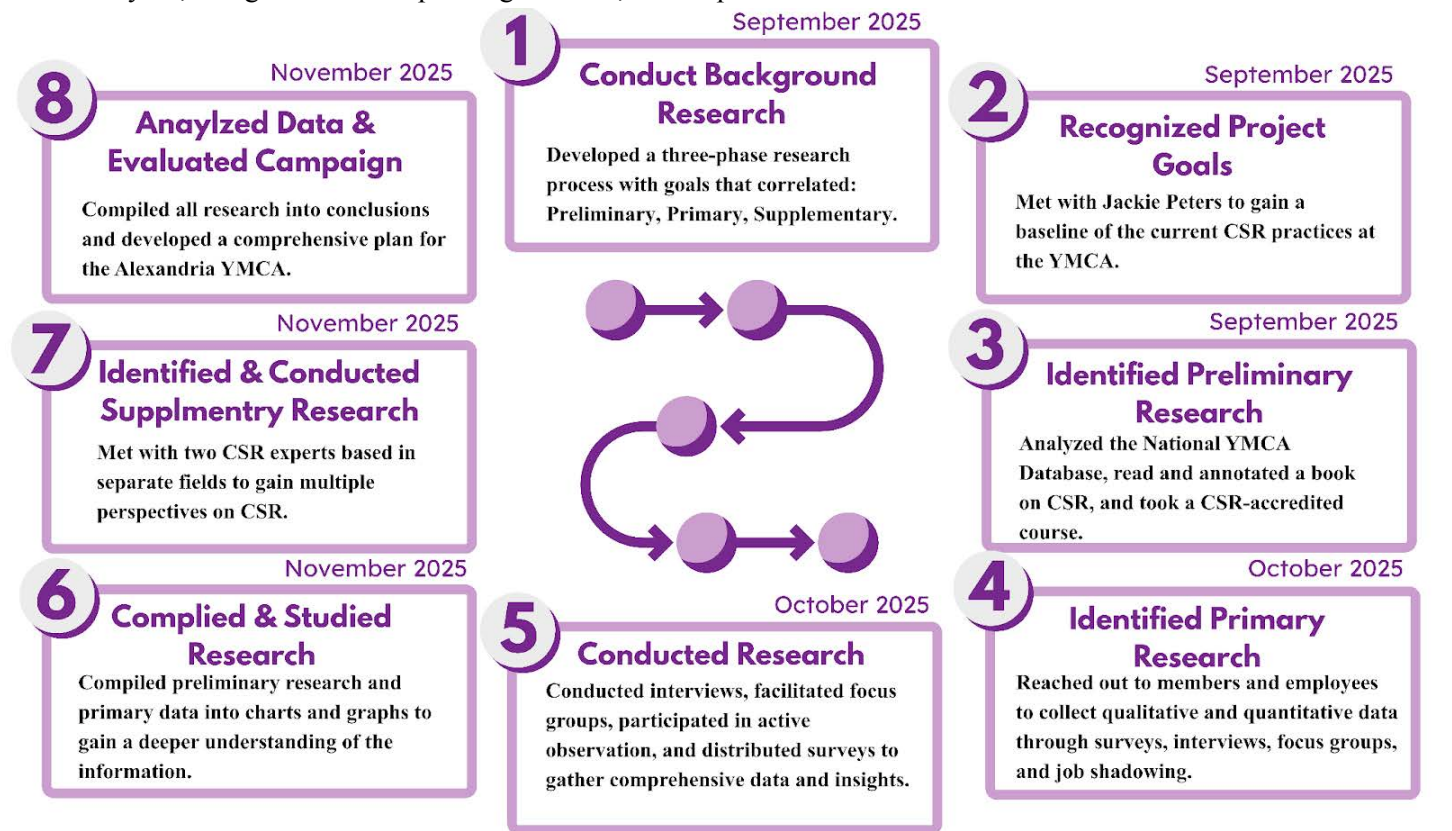
Supplementary Research

Table 3: Supplementary Research Methods

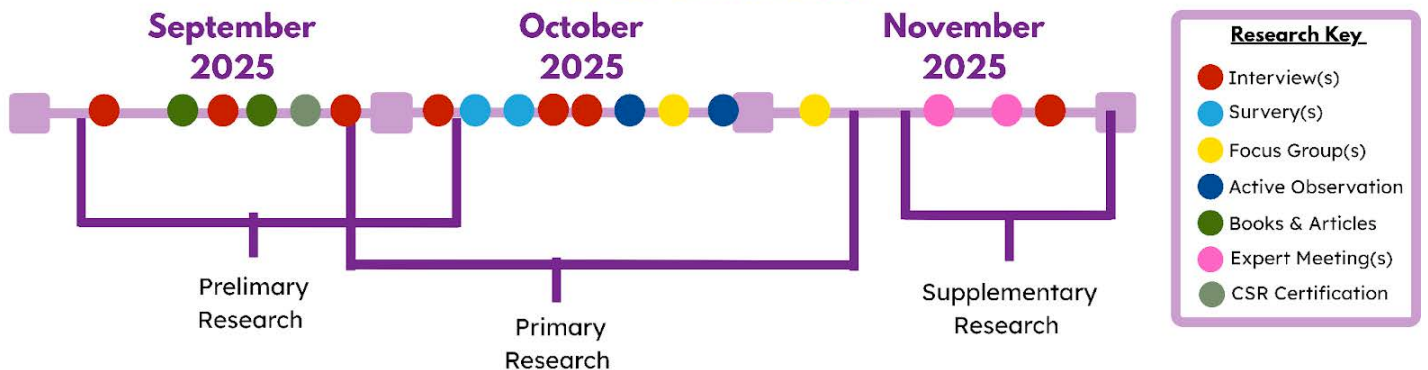
Supplementary Research	Description	Raionale
8- CSR Experts 8.1- Bill Bring 8.2- Jon Olson	8.1- Met with Bill Bring, founder of Bring Corp., to gather an understanding of AI applications within the realm of CSR practices. 8.2- Met with Jon Olson, CFO at Alexandria Industries, to gain an understanding of CSR initiatives within the manufacturing industry.	8.1, 8.2- Met with separate mentors in different fields (Technology and Manufacturing) to gain different perspectives and opinions in each respective field.

B. Process used to conduct the selected research methods

JDL Consulting developed a **comprehensive research plan** spanning **September to November 2025**. The firm began by using a **three-phase, layered research approach that aligns with the three research goals** developed. Below is a detailed layout, along with a corresponding timeline, for the process used to conduct the firm's research.



Research Timeline



IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

A. Findings of the research study

1- Books/Articles

1.1 The A-Z of Corporate Social Responsibility

The preliminary research began with a thorough examination of a book on CSR, titled "The A-Z of Corporate Social Responsibility." The book outlines the fundamentals of Corporate Social Responsibility and its relevance in today's workforce. Throughout the book, a recurring theme is that CSR efforts **must align with the local community's needs**, regulatory context, stakeholder expectations, and available resources.

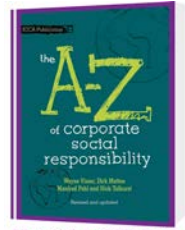


Figure 4.1: CSR Book

1.1) Key Finding: CSR practices should be tailored to each organization's unique needs and values.

1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility through an Economic Lens

The article "Corporate Social Responsibility through an Economic Lens" discussed CSR specifically from a financial perspective, focusing on sustaining socially valuable programming without undermining economic stability. Within a non-profit organization, mission-driven initiatives are essential. Ineffective use of funds can lead to such issues as donor fatigue, which can cause donors to stop donating to causes they support. The article **emphasizes the importance of CSR initiatives being transparent, clearly communicated, and efficiently implemented** so donors can see where their money is being allocated.



Figure 4.2: CSR Website Analysis

1.2) Key Finding: To maximize effectiveness, CSR efforts must be purposeful and clearly communicated.

2- Corporate Analysis

2.1 National YMCA Database Review

JDL Consulting analyzed the YMCA National Database to determine quantitative data within the Alexandria YMCA. Upon observation of the database, JDL Consulting found that **20,481 people and 9,122 households live within a 12-mile radius** of the Alexandria YMCA. Within this population, 11% of households are below the poverty level, and the diversity index is 19.4%. Additionally, only 30% of people within the Alexandria Area make exercising regularly a priority. Together, these figures reveal a community with **significant financial need, limited exercise participation, and meaningful room for growth in YMCA engagement.**



Figure 4.3 : Pictogram

2.1) Key Finding: About 30% of individuals in the area make regular exercise a priority.

3- CSR Certification Class

3.1- ISO 26000 - Business Practices for Corporate Social Responsibility

The firm participated in an ISO CSR class to become familiar with the concepts of ISO 26000. ISO 26000 differs from other standards in that it provides guidance rather than a set of requirements. The program highlights seven core principles across all facets of Corporate Social Responsibility. The course took a more global approach to CSR initiatives, allowing the firm to gain a different perspective on the subject. Ultimately, the goal of implementing ISO 26000 is to **improve reputation, increase "member trust," and strengthen community relationships.**



Figure 4.4: ISO Certificate

3.1) Key Finding: Effective use of CSR should strengthen member trust and community relationships.

Surveys

4.1- Employee Survey

The primary research began with a survey distributed to YMCA employees, which received 48 responses. The graphic below (Figure 4.1) shows three of the most significant responses.

"Social media is a powerful tool for reaching the community, and we need to use it more effectively to grow support for the work we do." -Anonymous Employee

"There's plenty of room for growth here, and I'd love to see us create more opportunities for older active adults." -Anonymous Employee

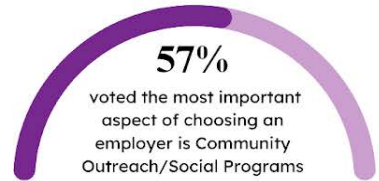


Figure 4.5 : Key Findings Employee Survey

4.2- Member Survey

JDL Consulting's member survey garnered 102 responses. The corresponding graphic (Figure 4.2) highlights three key factors that emerged.

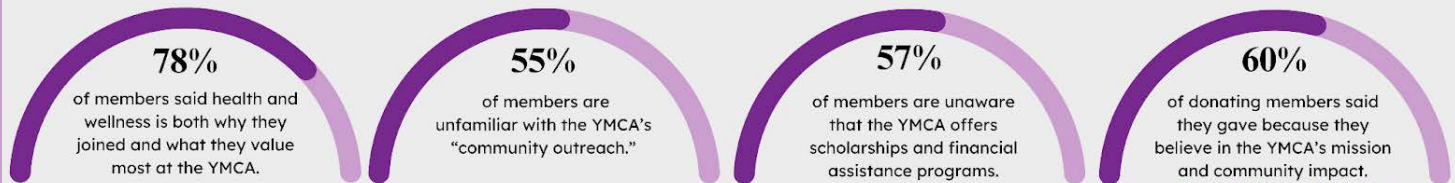


Figure 4.6 : Key Findings Member Survey

5- Focus Groups

5.1- Mothers

A group of five mothers who meet weekly at the YMCA was more than willing to meet with the firm. Several topics were discussed, but the most prevalent issue was the rising cost of sports. One mother stated that their family had spent over \$12,000 on sports alone in the previous year. The consensus was that **sports are crucial to youth development, but prices are getting out of hand and becoming unattainable for many families.**



Figure 4.7: Mothers Focus Group

5.1) → Key Finding: Opportunities for affordable youth development are needed throughout the community.

5.2- Retirees

A meeting with a group of retired YMCA members provided key insights into seniors' perspectives. The average membership duration of the group ranged from 3 to 15 years. **Although this group meets at the YMCA four times a week, they were generally unaware of the programs and initiatives offered there.** For most of the group, the YMCA's number of childcare initiatives was the extent of their knowledge regarding CSR practices.



Figure 4.8: Retiree Focus Group

5.2) → Key Finding: Frequent YMCA members tend to be unaware of CSR efforts.

6- Interviews

6.1- Jackie Peters

Meeting with Jackie Peters five times throughout the duration of the project helped the firm **understand the YMCA's CSR efforts and identify current CSR-focused activities.** Jackie talked through specific points of interest that both members and the community are invested in. For instance, many members are not necessarily as interested in ethical sourcing or sustainable practices. At the same time, members are interested in social programs or financial diversity. This information is essential for defining the project scope for developing the YMCA's CSR practices.



Figure 4.9 : Meeting with Jackie Peters

6.1) → Key Finding: Social impact and youth development are top priorities for YMCA and community members.

6.2- Greg Gack

As Executive Director of the St. Cloud YMCA, Greg Gack offered a unique perspective on Corporate Social Responsibility. Greg shared the **current CSR efforts at the St. Cloud YMCA, including partnerships with Big Brothers Big Sisters Foundation to provide affordable opportunities for youth development.** Additionally, Greg shared that the YMCA is placing particular emphasis on facilitating opportunities for older and younger members to build relationships.



Figure 4.10: Zoom Call with Greg Gack

6.2) → Key Finding: The St. Cloud YMCA is strengthening relationships across generations.

6.3- David Kjos and Larry Ortloff

Meeting with David Kjos and Larry Ortloff provided key insights into the YMCA's origins, sharing the founders' and donors' goals from the start. First and foremost was making sure families of all ages and financial backgrounds had opportunities to improve their health and wellness. Another goal was to provide opportunities that the community lacked, such as swimming lessons and reliable childcare. An **aspect they felt could be improved was the opportunities for seniors.** Ortloff specifically noted that the YMCA has over **2,700 seniors but offers somewhat limited programming for them.** Both Kjos and Ortloff felt this was an area donors would be willing to support.



Figure 4.11: Meeting with Founders

6.3) → Key Finding: Donors and members are interested in expanding opportunities for active seniors.

7- Active Observation

7.1- Capital Campaign Meeting

The firm had the opportunity to sit in on a Capital Campaign meeting, a group of individuals who make up the core donors and volunteers at the YMCA. After observing and asking questions, the firm learned that **many in the meeting felt the YMCA is doing well, but there is still a large pocket of individuals who are going unreached.** When it comes to communicating about CSR initiatives, specifically social impact programs, the consensus is that word spreads much more slowly than desired.



Figure 4.12: Capital Campaign Meeting

7.1) → Key Finding: The YMCA does well with social impact efforts, though promotion could improve.

8.1 Bill Bring (Founder of BringCorp)

To gain further input on CSR practices within other industries, the firm met with Bill Bring, founder of Bring Corp, a specialist in artificial intelligence. **Bring emphasized that CSR needs to be driven by customers, community, and employees, or else an outcome that holds value will not be experienced.** Additionally, Bring shared platforms such as ChatGPT and Gemini can be helpful when analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. This allows the organizations to compare both member and community data, maximizing the effectiveness of CSR initiatives.



Figure 4.13: Zoom with AI Specialist Bill Bring

8.1) → Key Finding: CSR needs to be driven by customers, community, and employees.

8.2 Jon Olson (CEO of Alexandria Industries)

DL Consulting met with Jon Olson, CEO of Alexandria Industries, a manufacturing company located in Alexandria, MN. Jon shared that in his experience, **customers tend to have a greater appreciation for community outreach programs** than other initiatives, such as ethically sourced products or increased enforcement of sustainability standards. These programs are more tangible for many smaller communities, such as Alexandria.



Figure 4.14 : Meeting with Jon Olson

8.2) → Key Finding: Smaller communities value initiatives they can join and benefit from, directly or indirectly.

B. Conclusions based on the findings

Conclusion #1

Based on Findings

1

Members feel opportunities for healthy living should be available to all.

2.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1

One of the primary reasons people join the YMCA is to maintain a healthy lifestyle while building connections with others. However, **many members expressed concern over the rising costs of supporting a healthy lifestyle, particularly for adolescents.** With year-round travel sports becoming increasingly prevalent, many families struggle financially, leaving children without access to youth sports. Participation in these programs not only **helps children develop essential motor skills** but also **teaches valuable life skills such as teamwork, dedication, and perseverance,** making youth sports a critical component of both physical and mental development. Low-cost opportunities are needed to ensure that all children can develop these skills and learn and maintain an active lifestyle.

Conclusion #2

Based on Findings

2

An opportunity exists to fill a gap in senior programming.

5.2, 6.1, 6.3

The YMCA prides itself on offering programming for all ages, including seniors. **With seniors (ages 65+) making up 30% of the YMCA's membership, it is evident that programs need to be offered for this group.** Both Jackie Peters and the Capital Campaign board emphasized that creating additional opportunities for this demographic is the next step towards improvement within the YMCA. There remains a need for activities that support older adults' physical and mental health, as many struggle to adapt to the changes that come with aging. There are very few opportunities for seniors throughout the community, and social development is often overlooked. Many older members already rely on the YMCA as a gathering place, so expanding programming in this area would **help attract seniors seeking both wellness and a sense of community.** By creating dedicated spaces and programs for social interaction, the YMCA can foster friendships, reduce feelings of isolation, and provide a supportive environment where seniors feel connected and valued.

Conclusion #3

Based on Findings

3

CSR is most effective when driven by community needs.

1.2, 3.1, 6.2, 8.1, 8.2

Taking time to understand what community members feel strongly about is an essential step in setting up CSR-geared activities. **Attempting to implement generic CSR efforts often results in a lack of community response.** When community members can actively participate in CSR efforts or clearly see its direct impact on the community, they buy in and support CSR much more strongly than they otherwise would. As a result, the **YMCA's CSR efforts need to be tailored to the specific needs of the Alexandria community.** Focusing on issues relevant to the Alexandria Area, such as the rising cost of youth sports or the lack of affordable childcare, is a much more effective way to address CSR concerns. Rather than trying to cover all the angles of Corporate Social Responsibility, the YMCA should focus on tackling issues that clearly resonate with community members.

Conclusion #4

Based on Findings

4

Improvements are needed in promoting the YMCA's CSR efforts.

1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 7.1

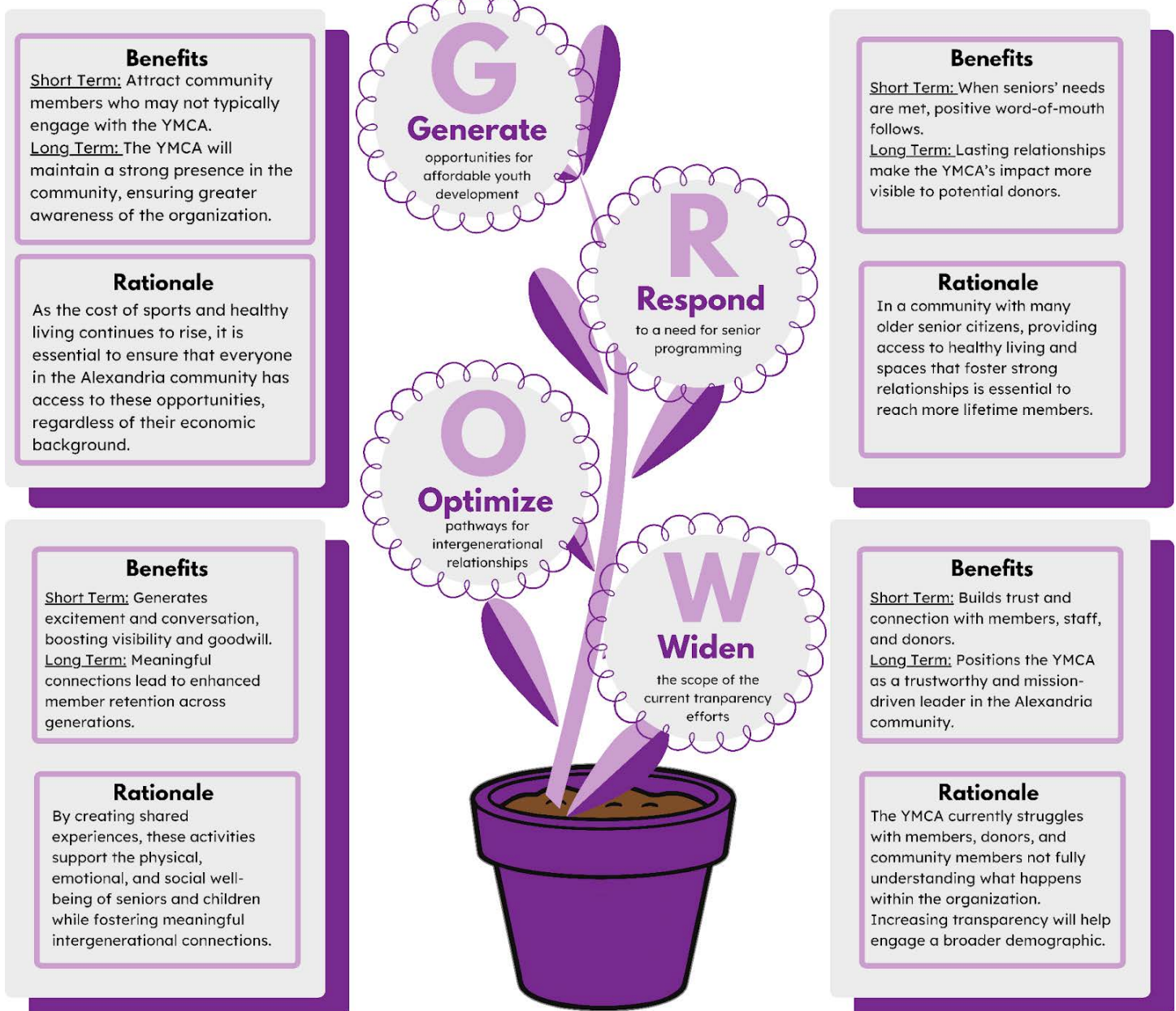
Clear communication is crucial to ensure that members and the broader community understand the extent of the YMCA's CSR efforts. **When updates, initiatives, and programs are infrequent, there is a disconnect in understanding the positive impacts the YMCA has on Alexandria and the surrounding area.** The YMCA already has many CSR initiatives in place, but many members are unaware of them. **Failing to communicate these programs to members makes them relatively ineffective at gaining member and community support.** By consistently sharing newsletters, social media posts, and information about community events, the YMCA can ensure that members, donors, and residents understand its impact, stay informed about current projects, and feel more connected to its mission.

V. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

A. Objectives and rationale of the proposed strategic plan

The **GROW the Future** campaign aims to improve the Alexandria YMCA's CSR initiatives to enhance member and donor experiences. Through eight purposefully curated activities designed by JDL Consulting, the campaign focuses on creating affordable opportunities for youth, meeting the needs of senior citizens, fostering intergenerational relationships, and enhancing transparency.

GROW THE FUTURE



B. Proposed activities and timelines

G

Generate

opportunities for affordable youth development

The first objective of the **Grow the Future** campaign is to generate opportunities for affordable youth development. By implementing a sponsored intramural sports league, the YMCA will attract customers who may not typically engage in the YMCA. Childcare scholarships will ensure that the cost is not a barrier to parents seeking childcare. Together, both initiatives will provide access to healthy living opportunities for people from diverse economic backgrounds.

Home Team Intramural League

Activity Description:

The firm recommends **creating an intramural league for kids of all ages to participate in sports and experience a healthy lifestyle without the added financial pressure on parents.** Facilitating three leagues, each lasting eight weeks, allows kids to experience a variety of sports, such as flag football, basketball, and soccer. Using the facilities already available at the YMCA and **securing sponsorships seasonally across the community will allow the YMCA to keep the league fee at \$20 per participant.** In return for sponsoring the league, businesses and organizations will receive a shout-out in a promotional video created specifically for that league and a team named after their business. Their business name will also be featured on the team's t-shirts.

Rationale:

As sports costs continue to rise, it is becoming harder for parents to afford their children's participation fees (Key Finding 5.1). Rising costs can be a barrier for many underprivileged families, this program ensures that youth from all economic backgrounds can learn to live a healthy lifestyle. By creating this league, the YMCA will take a **significant step toward financial diversity across its programs** and open new sponsorship opportunities. Additionally, the program **increases the YMCA's potential to reach new members and donors.**



Figure 5.1: Sample League Jerseys

Bright Beginnings Childcare Scholarships

Activity Description:

The YMCA aims to provide more than just childcare; they strives to instill healthy living in their children from the start. **To further this, the firm recommends providing Bright Beginnings Scholarships to help underprivileged families shoulder the burden of childcare.** Individuals interested will complete a short Google Form and be awarded scholarships of 50%, 75%, and 100% for the YMCA childcare program. As with the intramural leagues, sponsorships will be secured to help fund scholarships. Sponsors will be included on a "Caring Hearts" wall, be published in the monthly CSR report, and receive a shout-out on social media. This process would be carried out by the YMCA's childcare office, utilizing staff currently on payroll.

Rationale:

Childcare is an issue the community feels strongly about (Key Finding 5.2, 6.1). Providing scholarships for families that cannot afford such care **ensures that children have a consistent, safe, and stable environment in which to learn and play.** Additionally, childcare services help parents allocate time to work, education, or other household responsibilities. Childcare support will appeal to both potential donors and members and will be highly valued by current members.



Figure 5.2: Bright Beginnings Website

R

Respond

to a need for senior programming

The second objective of the **Grow the Future** campaign is to respond to a need for senior programming. By implementing raised gardening classes, the YMCA will support environmental sustainability. "Age Well" nursing home visits will allow each individual attending to learn about healthy living options for seniors. Both initiatives will help people live healthier lives and build relationships that will lead to more lifetime members and donors.

Growing Together Senior Gardening Class

Activity Description:

The firm recommends **utilizing the currently existing raised garden beds to teach a senior gardening class**. A partnership with Colorful Seasons Garden Center, a local gardening store, will be secured before the class opens. In addition to gardening supplies, Colorful Seasons will provide guest practitioners for each class. In return, they will receive a unique volunteer opportunity for employees and naming rights to the YMCA's current garden. **As a result of the partnership with Colorful Seasons, the YMCA will be able to run the program at essentially no additional cost.**

Rationale:

Mental health is often overlooked in discussions of longevity, especially among older adults. **Providing a class where active seniors can get outside and move is a crucial step toward continued healthy living** (Key Finding 7.1). The fresh air and movement this class provides will have significant physical and mental health benefits. This class would also allow seniors to get out, socialize, and make new friends, another step toward improved mental health.



Figure 5.3: Proposed Senior Gardening Class

Age Well Assisted Living Visits

Activity Description:

The firm recommends that the **YMCA collaborate with the local assisted living home, Grand Arbor, to offer a healthy living class to both YMCA members and assisted living residents**. To ensure that all involved receive a well-rounded experience, the class will have activities focused on movement and mobility, brain and memory boosts, nutrition, and social connection. Sessions would take place three times a week and last 30 to 45 minutes. Ultimately, this collaboration would strengthen wellness and connection among older adults.

Rationale:

Throughout the community, there is ample opportunity for youth and adult enrichment through the YMCA and other organizations. Unfortunately, seniors are often neglected within community programming (Key Finding 6.3). **Many struggle with the transition to living the lifestyle that comes with age. The "Age Well" classes ensure equal programming and opportunities for seniors.**



Figure 5.4: Age-Well Assisted Living Visits



The third objective of the **Grow the Future** campaign is to optimize pathways for intergenerational relationships. By introducing an intergenerational pickleball tournament, the YMCA will attract customers who may not otherwise be involved. Yoga with grandchildren will create a fun experience for all to stay healthy. Together, these initiatives help bring generations together, strengthening connections while encouraging healthy, active lifestyles.

Paddles Across Generations Tournament

Activity Description:

Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports across the country. Unfortunately, there are very few opportunities to play in Minnesota during the winter months. To address this gap, the firm recommends hosting three mid-winter **pickleball tournaments** at the YMCA. These tournaments will encourage participation from **mixed-age teams, including grandparents and grandchildren, parents and children, siblings, and other family or community pairings**. The tournaments will take place on the third Saturday of December, January, and February indoors at the YMCA, utilizing existing gym space. Several sponsorships will be secured throughout the community to keep costs at \$15 per non-member team (free for members). Additionally, the firm suggests reaching out to the Alexandria Pickleball Association to help provide equipment, such as paddles, for those without their own, as well as extra nets and balls.

Rationale:

With the rise of social media and technology, the generational divide is greater than ever (Key Finding 6.2). The Paddles



Figure 5.5: Paddles Across Generations Proposed Tournament Bracket

Across Generations Tournament will bring people together while showcasing the YMCA's mission in action and attract potential members and donors. Additionally, **it will combat winter lethargy, providing an opportunity for those who might not be inclined to get up and move.** Additionally, teams will be intergenerational, **strengthening relationships.**

Generations in Motion Yoga

Activity Description:

The Intergenerational Wellness Yoga Class **will offer a guided, low-impact session for grandparents and grandchildren to participate in together.** The class will incorporate simple stretches, breathing exercises, and other activities that allow participants to move and stay active while still maintaining accessibility for all. To make the experience enjoyable for younger participants, the class will incorporate elements such as theme-based yoga routines and partner poses to strengthen trust and connection.

Rationale:

Many older adults experience isolation and a lack of connection with younger family members (Key Finding 6.2). At the same time, many younger children lack structured activities and opportunities to create meaningful connections with older adults. By creating a class centered around healthy living and communication, this class **will improve wellness while bridging the gap between generations.**



Figure 5.6: Proposed Generations in Motions Class

Widen pathways for intergenerational relationships

The fourth objective of the **Grow the Future** campaign is to widen the scope of current transparency efforts. Producing a "Top 3" video highlighting current YMCA events will raise awareness of CSR efforts. Quarterly Reports will allow viewers to fully understand the impact the YMCA has on the community. Together, the initiatives will raise awareness of the YMCA's current values and attract more members and donors.

Top 3 Monthly Videos

Activity Description:

JDL Consulting recommends creating a **monthly "Top 3" video highlighting the YMCA's most important developments.** Each video will showcase the three new activities taking place at the YMCA that members should be aware of. These could include new ice cooling systems, upcoming classes, special events, or future tournaments and intramural leagues. The video will run continuously in the lobby to engage members as they enter the facility and will be posted on social media to reach a broader audience.

Rationale:

The "Top 3" videos will **increase transparency and strengthen connections within the community, an area identified by the leadership team as a current challenge.** (Key Finding 5.2). Sharing essential updates in a quick format ensures all YMCA members, donors, and potential new supporters are informed about critical improvements, new programs, and upcoming events.



Figure 5.7: Proposed Top 3 Video(s)

Quarterly Impact Reports

Activity Description:

The firm recommends **releasing a quarterly impact report detailing the ongoing CSR practices happening within the YMCA.** The report will include statistics from the quarter, such as **energy saved and volunteer hours served.** It will also **include member/community testimonials and a spotlight on a current CSR initiative at the YMCA.** The report would be released to members and donors via email, with physical copies available upon request. The report will be posted on the YMCA website, and a physical copy will be placed on the community update board in the lobby.

Rationale:

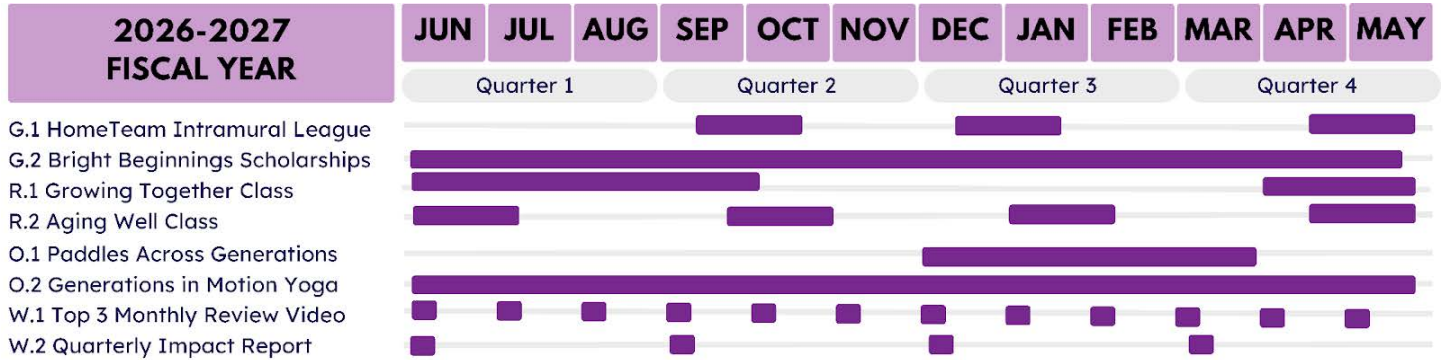
The YMCA has several CSR initiatives in place. Unfortunately, there is not much effort put towards informing the public about them (Key Finding 7.1). A Quarterly report would **allow the YMCA to peel back the layers, showing what's happening behind the scenes.** This will show both community members and potential donors that the organization is making strides towards improving CSR throughout the community.



Figure 5.8: Proposed Quarterly Impact Report

Activity Timeline

Below are the activities within the **GROW the Future** campaign and the months in which they will be implemented during the 2026/2027 fiscal year.



C. Proposed metrics or key performance indicators to measure plan effectiveness

Key Performance Indicators

Each activity must be evaluated using a specific metric to measure the success of the **GROW the Future** campaign. Table 4 shows how each activity will be tracked using a key performance indicator system. After completing the activities, each activity will be measured using a poor-to-excellent analysis based on the metrics.

Activity	Metric Indicator	Poor	Good	Excellent	Description
G.1 HomeTeam Intramural League	Sponsorship Revenue Secured	\$1,000 or fewer	\$1,000-\$4,999	\$5,000+	The amount of sponsorship money the league brings in.
G.2 Bright Beginnings Scholarships	Number of Scholarships Awarded	4 or fewer	5-14	15+	Number of youth receiving financial support.
R.1 Growing Together Senior Gardening Class	Repeat Participation Rate	10 or fewer	11-20	20+	Participants returning for additional classes.
R.2 Aging Well Nursing Home Visits	Resident Star Score	1 or 2	3	4 or 5	Senior class engagement level.
O.1 Paddles Across Generations Pickleball Tournament	Number of Teams	20 or fewer	21-30	31+	Overall, participants in the tournament.
O.2 Generations in Motion Yoga	Attendance Per Session	20 or fewer	21-30	31+	Number of individuals in attendance at each session.
W.1 Top 3 Monthly Review Video	Increase in Web Traffic After Video Release	5% increase	5-14% increase	15%+ increase	Boost in website visits following each video.
W.2 Quarterly Impact Report	Number of New Donations Generated	0-4 new donations	5-14 new donations	15+ new donations	Specific number of donations generated, regardless of amount.

Sales Funnel

Another way to measure the success of the **GROW the Future** campaign is by utilizing a sales funnel. The graphic below shows a sales funnel for potential members and donors at the Alexandria YMCA. The sales funnel also highlights the conversion rate as it moves from awareness to interest to decision to action, which affects the donor or member's journey and results in quantitative numbers for new memberships and new donors at the end of the first year of the GROW the Future campaign. At the end of the first year, the campaign's success can be determined by surpassing 298 new memberships and eight new donations. By analyzing the conversion rates at each stage, the YMCA can identify areas for improvement and adjust marketing strategies to increase overall effectiveness and maximize growth.

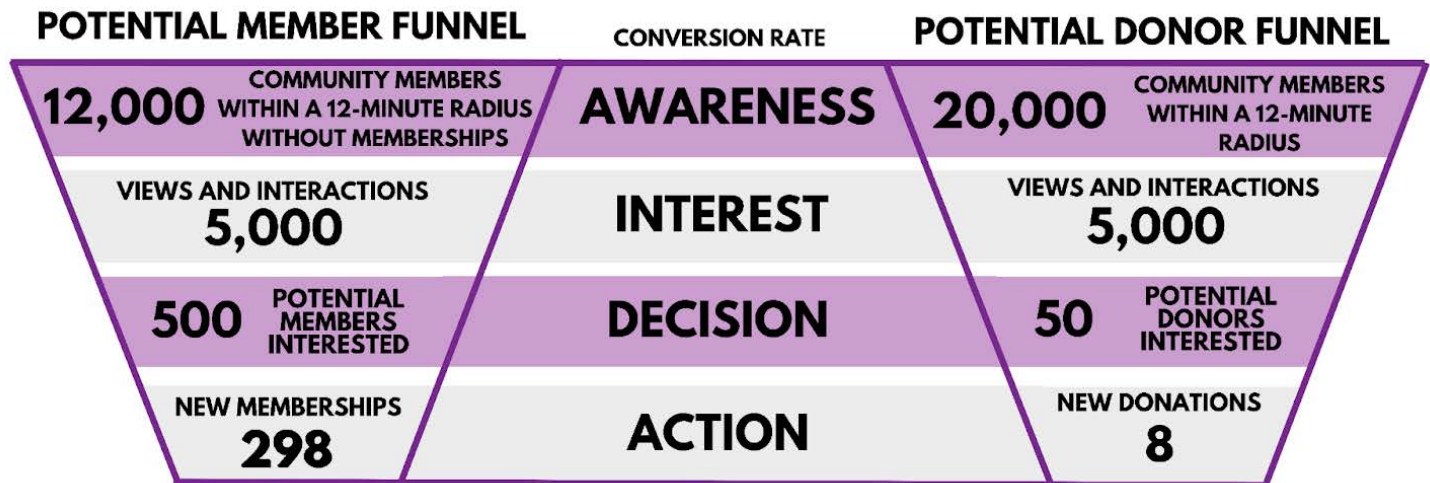


Figure 5.9: Potential Member and Donor Sales Funnel

VI. PROPOSED BUDGET

New Member Revenue

New memberships will be the primary source of revenue. Annual growth projections are based on research into integrating enhanced CSR programs, which is expected to drive membership acquisition and generate a 4-5% member growth rate. While membership fees will remain unchanged, the emphasis will be on leveraging CSR to attract new, revenue-generating members.

Table 5 : New Member Revenue

Fiscal Year	Member at Start of Year	Growth Rate	New Members	Average Annual Revenue per New Member	Total Annual Revenue Increase
2026/2027	7,453	.04	298	\$15.50 x 12 = \$186	\$186 x 298 = \$55,428
2027/2028	7,751	.045	349	\$15.50 x 12 = \$186	\$186 x 349 = \$64,914
2028/2029	8,100	.05	405	\$15.50 x 12 = \$186	\$186 x 405 = \$75,330

New Donor Revenue

With strong historical community support and giving, the budget projects a 4-5% annual increase in fundraising revenue over the next three years. Increased community awareness will result in new individual and business donors for years to come.

Table 6: Individual Donor Revenue

Fiscal Year	Individual Donors at Start of Year	Growth Rate	New Donors	Average Annual Individual Donation	Total Revenue Increase
2026/2027	149	.04	6	\$630	\$3,780
2027/2028	155	.045	7	\$630	\$4,410
2028/2029	162	.05	8	\$630	\$5,040

Table 7: Business Donor Revenue

Fiscal Year	Business Donors at Start of Year	Growth Rate	New Donors	Average Annual Business Donation	Total Revenue Increase
2026/2027	57	.04	2	\$2,000	\$4,000
2027/2028	59	.045	3	\$2,000	\$6,000
2028/2029	62	.05	3	\$2,000	\$6,000

Table 8: Grow the Future Campaign Expenditures

Activity	Campaign Investment	Year One
G.1 HomeTeam Intramural League	Employees (6) Hourly Pay (\$19) Hours Weekly (4) League Weeks (24) = Employee Cost \$10,944 T-shirts cost (\$8.50) Participants (400) = T-shirt Cost \$3,400 - \$3,400 sponsored = \$0 Participants (400) Cost per participant (20) = Money paid from participant = \$8,000 New Nike Elite Court 2.0 Basketballs (20) Cost (\$35) = \$700 Official Standard NFL Flag Football (20) Cost (\$25) = \$500 Flag Football Set (75) Cost (\$4) = \$300	\$4,444
G.2 Bright Beginnings Scholarships	Childcare Coordinators (2) Hourly Pay (\$32) Hours Annually (3) = Employee Cost \$192 Donations given = Scholarships provided = \$0	\$192
R.1 Growing Together Senior Gardening Class	Employees (2) Hourly Pay (\$26) Hours Weekly (3) Class Weeks (26) = Employee Cost \$4,056 Colorful Seasons Partnership / Naming Rights = Donation of Seeds and Time = \$3,000	\$4,056
R.2 Aging Well Assisted Living Visits	Healthy Living Specialists (2) Hourly Pay (\$26) Hours Weekly (3) Class Weeks (42) = Employee Cost \$6,552 Miscellaneous Supplies (\$1,000) = Supplies Cost = \$1,000	\$7,552
O.1 Paddles Across Generations Pickleball Tournament	Employees (2) Hourly Pay (\$19) Hours per Tournament (5) Tournaments (3) = Employee Cost \$570 Pickle Ball Paddles Donated by Alexandria Pickle Ball Foundation = Borrowing of Paddles \$0 T-shirts cost (\$8.50) Participants (120) = T-shirt Cost \$1,020 # of Teams (20), Tournaments (3), Cost per Team (\$15) = Money Paid from Participants \$900	\$690
O.2 Generations in Motion Yoga	Instructor(s) (2) Hourly Pay (\$26) Hours per Week (3) Class Weeks (40) = Instructor Cost \$6,240	\$6,240
W.1 Top 3 Monthly Review Video	Managers (2) Hourly Pay (\$32) Hours per Month (2) Months (12) = Employee Cost = \$1,536	\$1,536
W.2 Quarterly Impact Report	Member Experience Director (1) Hourly Pay (\$32) Hours per Quarter (6) Quarters (4) = Director Cost \$768	\$768

Return on Investment

Table 9: Return on Investment

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
Net Revenue	\$63,208	\$75,324	\$86,370
Campaign Investment	\$25,478	\$25,478	\$25,478
ROI	\$37,730	\$49,846	\$60,892
ROI Percentage	148.1%	195.6%	238.9%

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Table 10: Bibliography

Consultants	Personal Interviews	Internet Sites
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