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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The report aims to provide an understanding of the significance of community engagement. It is about working together for the welfare of people who belong to the same community group with similar interests. Community engagement is necessary to make people aware of their societal issues and engage in collaborative efforts. Many issues prevail in society regarding unemployment, crimes, unemployment, harassment, illiteracy, etc. Many organisations like NGOs or NPOs participate in the community's welfare by providing opportunities for volunteers. (Martin, 2006) It is necessary to participate in these programmes by engaging in various events and programmes. This report will discuss Age UK, a charitable trust founded in 2009. it supports the community by helping an aged group of society. It is one of the largest charitable organisations in the UK that support aged people. The report will provide many changes with the organisation faces and how they could be resolved.

MAIN BODY

TASK

Describe the project or programme

Community engagement programmes are crucial for a society that looks for the development of the community. These programmes provide many resources, knowledge, and assistance, which would be helpful to eradicate negative consequences to get better well-being of people. Community engagement is the concept of working together to share the same values, beliefs and thoughts for working collaboratively (Forrester, 2019). There are many reasons to establish community engagement programmes, such as crime reduction, giving education and awareness and understanding the perception of others as well. These programmes require many resources, time, cost, and efforts to drive the best results from participation in different individuals. The programme or project run by Age UK is supported by many shareholders' interest and community volunteering to provide outstanding support to older people. The primary purpose of this programme is to provide a better living to the people who are left out of home and cannot survive older age. For that reason, Age UK has formed this programme to provide adequate resources, care and needs to aged people. People feel lonely and helpless at this age due to family criticism, discrimination, monetary issues, and many other internal affairs. Therefore, it is required

to encourage the engagement of older people, which will enhance the positivity in the community. There are various best practices derived from this programme and how it is beneficial through the stakeholder's participation that are described below:

- As per the principle of careful planning and preparing for community engagement, Age UK has adequate plans to support older people by defining their purpose, i.e., eliminating internal affairs and providing care to them. Stakeholder participation is essential (Fohner, Volk, and Woodahl, 2019). They are the key people who directly contact age people to feel valued by spending time. In addition, they get guidance and support from Age UK in requiring any resources or investing in relevant practice.
- As per the principle of Inclusion and Demographic Diversity, the programme of Age UK support diversified values. They listen to each person's voice and perception to identify their problems well. The organisation derive best practice by accompanying older people to many locations so that they would not feel discomfort or inconvenience. The involvement of community engagement is effective as there is a diversified personality who belongs to different cultures and values.
- Transparency and trust are the main principles of community engagement, showing that shareholder participation is beneficial to communicating and carrying out effective practice in the community (Di Napoli et al., 2019). This results in keeping trust in community programmes, and people would be encouraged to take action more in Age UK, which is necessary to expand community services across vast areas.

Relationships between the stakeholders and strategies are suitable for engagement

In community engagement, shareholder relations are essential for the organisation as community participation is about maintaining relations with people to benefit from together efforts (Adhikari, Pell, and Cheah, 2020). Relationships are necessary for community practices that involve mutual understanding, efforts, and shareholders' well-being. The more they get happy, the more they will put their best efforts into resolving community issues. There are many internal and external stakeholders in Age UK. The internal stakeholders include all the staff team, such as administration managers, shop assistants, marketing managers and project managers. They need to engage and keep Age UK always running well. External stakeholders refer to mainly the suppliers working for the community company, such as promotions, IT equipment suppliers,

funding by charities, or volunteers, which can be related to community customers and partners. (charity associations or web platforms). Therefore, strategies play a vital role in keeping these relations well. Therefore, there is a requirement of essential practices for Age UK to build positive relations with stakeholders. So, social media strategies are most helpful in keeping people in contact with each other. It helps create awareness, share thoughts and ideas and Research relevant knowledge. The use of social media and the internet has become extensive day by day, involving active stakeholders' engagement and carrying out effective community practices.

Engagement with the help of Social media platforms

Community engagement practices are effective with the use of social media platforms. Digitalisation is rapidly rising in the whole world, which helps in keeping people connected. Social media platforms are one of the effective channels to grow digitally. It involves the participation of a large number of people across the world. It is an effective tool for engaging people for community welfare (Wang et al., 2019). Age UK is taking much advantage of the social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to support the welfare of older people. Social media has much power to regulate the content worldwide, and people get the updates within seconds. Therefore, posts, videos, and blogs are the main elements of social media content that attract people's interest. The Age UK is undertaking the use of these channels in order to engage with stakeholders and acknowledge them about organisation practice. This makes them feel connected and valued (Kim et al., 2020) as there are a lot of activities and functions performed by Age UK across different locations in the country. So it often requires communication and interaction with stakeholders, which becomes easy with social media. The other charitable organisation, volunteers or investors get attracted through organisation blogs and posts and make their contribution to community welfare.

During Covid-19, Age UK has taken the potential benefit of channels like Facebook and website to provide necessary information to the community. For example, the organisation interacted with older people to assess all the promotions after the pandemic. It provided them assistance through communication, playing games, and making them indulge in activities to reduce family pressure and negativity.

Different social media platforms that support programme

Due to the excessive growth of digitalisation, various social media platforms are beneficial in many ways. The charitable organisation, NGOs, and community programmes are growing by

promoting through social media channels, enabling growth and wide reach into the community. It promotes interaction, relations, communication and collaboration. There are various social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. Age UK effectively utilises all the digital channels to engage stakeholders, make people connect and carry out collaborative work effectively. This helps in bringing positive solutions and avoiding confusion. Social media involves significant audience participation, which raises the overall world's purpose and objectives (Shackleton, 2018). The audience will engage more and want to participate in charitable programmes.

Age UK is presently using all the social media tools that emphasise their work and provide many opportunities to make people aware of the well-being of older people. It helps them eradicate issues from the community and promotes encouragement to be together with love and prosperity towards each other. For that instance, the organisation runs many campaigns and blogs on the website to support the growth of community engagement (Parker, 2020). They launch an attractive campaign for Christmas to eliminate people's loneliness and ascertain help from the public to make their lives brighter. (Age UK, 2017). Also, it helps the Age UK to raise funds for essential activities and resolve community issues. During Covid-19, the organisation effectively used social media to interact with help seekers and older people who would not care and affection.

The stakeholders play a vital role in carrying out effective practices to provide support and utmost care to older people (World Health Organization, 2017). Conclusion: there is the requirement of many skills that will be beneficial to achieving the organisational objectives in terms of community welfare. It is one of the critical concerns in society that require soft and potential skills in favour of society members. Interpersonal skills are the most required as social media images and posts must require communication and interaction with people to influence them. So, the stakeholders of Age UK must have these skills to accomplish their main motive of engaging prominent people and contributing to their donation funds and charity. These social media platforms help the company raise funds even in Covid-19 when people are homeless, unemployed, and facing homesickness. The time of the pandemic was very crucial for older people who were trying to manage their life and did not have family or children (Saltmarsh, 2017). Also, those who are apart from family feel burdened. Therefore, every organisation needs to maintain professional behaviour while talking with shareholders or performing activities.

There are many **benefits of social media platforms** which are described below:

Community participants: "Research suggests that having close ties to friends and family, and participating in meaningful social activities, may help people maintain their thinking skills better in later life and slow down cognitive decline. People who are socially engaged seem to have a lower risk of dementia, but the evidence is not yet strong enough to draw firm conclusions." (Age UK, 2020)

The social media platforms have helped the Age UK in community participation across broad areas. Social media has much power to reach several people simultaneously, which is beneficial for Age UK to support older people (Bracic, 2018). It provides an opportunity for their help seekers to interact with their family or friends, which will make them feel valued. In elder age, people want communication to reduce their loneliness which became possible through engaging a group of people together through social interaction.

"Digital contacts, for example through email or Facebook, count as well as seeing people in person or talking on the phone. By using computer-based communication, you can expand your social world, for example by joining online communities, as well as maintaining existing contacts" (Age UK, 2020).

Collaboration: this is vital for every organisation to expand their reach. Collaboration is rapidly rising due to the rise in social media and technology. It helps the community stakeholders interact with other institutions like NGOs and work on the mutual objectives to bring better welfare to society (Farner, 2019). Age UK has taken advantage of this benefit by collaborating with many other organisations like New helm, UNICEF, etc.

Socio-cultural integration: this is also a benefit for Age UK as social-cultural integration is a must to make society aware of the conditions of older people. They seek assistance from the

general public through social media channels to make people engage in thinking about the welfare of society (Mehta, 1997).

Internal and external factors that influence community development

There are various internal and external factors that influence community development. Internal factors could be managed or changed by the Age UK. It shows how an organisation functions internally. Whereas external factors are uncertain and risky, which might impact the development of community programmes (Jung et al., 2016).

Internal factors: all the internal resources, members, and functions impact the Age UK. The managers need to adopt a forward-looking approach to forecast the future consequences and carry out work activities according to the strategies. Stakeholders' trust, conflicts and discrimination are issues in community development (Menguc et al., 2010).

External factors: these factors, directly and indirectly, impact the business environment. This includes members, society, technology, legal obligations and many more. Therefore, the managers must assist with these issues through forwarding approaches that undertake modernisation and avoid uncertainties (Menguc et al., 2010).

"Internal and external factors determine how the company is building blocks in order to influence, engage with people, be sustainable and handle processes.

Influencing: Age UK aims to support clients' behaviours changes, inform policymakers and enhance the concept of ageing well within the community.

People: improve the recruiting process, listen to the staff and volunteers to support their life well-being, work together to make informed decisions, and implement well-organised development, training and learning programmes.

Sustainability: efficient use of resources and intelligent use of online platforms.

Processes: Maintain high-quality standards and robust impact measurement processes." (Age UK, 2022)

CONCLUSION

The report has concluded that community engagement is an essential part of the development of society. It is required to carry out practices that would eliminate any negativity from society and live life happily. Therefore, the report has identified that social media play a vital role in engaging stakeholders, maintaining relationships, and resolving internal and external environmental crises.

Community engagement in Age UK is all about positioning clients and team members in the middle of the process. Listening to them and learning from their experience and challenges significantly impact Age UK and, if well-executed, positively change its shape.

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