



*BREAKING THE SOUND BARRIER (SM)*

## Online Engagement Plan Proposal

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## **ABOUT CAMP WOODBINE**

[Camp Woodbine](#), a nonprofit dedicated to providing socialization, language stimulation and communication opportunities in a safe, fun and convenient environment for children and their families, started in 2009 after otolaryngologist and neurologist Dr. John T. McElveen, Jr. bought and named it in memory of his father.

Each year, Camp Woodbine hosts an event where the families of hearing-impaired children have the opportunity to interact with each other, share experiences and exchange information. The camp also allows parents to attend educational classes while their children enjoy the camp's activities. Other groups, including children with disabilities, pediatric cancer patients and children facing other life threatening or debilitating ailments, also utilize the camp.

Camp Woodbine has partnered with many organizations in the past for sponsorship, such as BEGINNINGS and The CARE Project, which I will touch upon later in this proposal.

## **SITUATION**

### **What is the situation facing the organization?**

Camp Woodbine's online presence is slim. Other than the link exchanges from Carolina Ear & Hearing Clinic and Carolina Ear Research Institute, which owners also own the camp, and a more well-known nonprofit, The CARE Project, the only other online presence Camp Woodbine has is its website and Facebook page. In the age of the Internet, in order to be considered a credible organization, Camp Woodbine needs to increase its online presence.

### **How can this situation be resolved to the mutual benefit of everyone involved?**

Updating Camp Woodbine's website will improve its first impression immensely. Next, posting more useful and valuable content to its public online will help, including strategic SEO. Lastly, increasing partnerships with similar organizations that have a large online presence will therefore increase Camp Woodbine's.

**What is the cause/history of this situation? What are the important facts related to this situation?**

In the past, Camp Woodbine has invited attendees through interpersonal communication tactics such as word-of-mouth and organizational communication tactics such as printed brochures handed out through attendees' local and regional doctors offices.

However, many parents of hearing impaired children have headed online to connect, interact, share and exchange experiences and information with other parents of hearing impaired children. Parents of hearing impaired children looking for more information and a community near where they live will not be able to find Camp Woodbine online unless they know the exact name when searching the Internet. Through tools such as Social Mention and Google Trends, there is nothing related to Camp Woodbine from terms parents will most likely search with, i.e., hearing impairment, children, Raleigh, hearing loss, deaf, etc. Camp Woodbine has only been mentioned twice on social networking sites (Pinterest and Facebook) from the results of [Share Tally](#), which you can find in the references at the end of this proposal.

**What is the significance or importance of the situation?**

While Camp Woodbine has been successful in its interpersonal and organizational communication tactics, I believe increasing its online presence and sustaining an online engagement with its audiences could further grow Camp Woodbine's successes in helping families of hearing-impaired children.

**GOAL**

The end goal of this program is to increase the amount of attendees to this year's October event through online engagement. However, to reach that end goal, Camp Woodbine must first double its online presence.

As previously mentioned, this can be done through improving its website, creating an

official Facebook page, posting content with strategic SEO keywords, and fostering a relationship with parents and doctors of hearing-impaired children. I will touch upon each of these points and more in this proposal.

## **AUDIENCE**

Camp Woodbine's target audience are parents, healthcare providers and teachers/school counselors of hearing-impaired children in the Triangle area, which is in Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

### **Parents**

Camp Woodbine's target audience is parents of hearing-impaired children ranging from birth to age 22. However, Camp Woodbine only allows children as young as 3-years-old to attend its event.

Parents of hearing-impaired children can sometimes feel [alone](#) without any support. They might not know what to do or where to go to help their child be happy and succeed in life. However, they are not alone, so they go to the Internet to search for tips, how-to's, support and communities. Most parents want more than anything in the world for their children to be happy and succeed in life. When there is a hindrance towards that happiness and success, parents will do just about anything to make it happen for their children. This is what motivates them to seek out answers in their community.

Camp Woodbine can help turn those children happy with its sense of community support right here in the state's capital. Being able to have parents seeking help find Camp Woodbine online is beneficial to everyone, especially the children.

### **Healthcare Providers**

Another of Camp Woodbine's target audiences is one of its largest influencers: doctors. Duke University Health System is well-known internationally, especially for their research

studies. Not only are they a prestigious university offering programs in medicine, nursing and clinic health care, they also have two major hospitals (Duke in Durham and Duke in Raleigh) and many smaller doctor offices located throughout the Triangle. UNC is the state's public college institution with its largest hospital in Chapel Hill, NC and multiple smaller offices throughout the state.

Those who practice otolaryngology (ear health), as well as treat pediatric cancer patients and children facing other life-threatening or debilitating ailments, know of Camp Woodbine. This word-of-mouth influencer relationship is what has helped Camp Woodbine thrive since its humble beginnings.

### **Teachers/School Counselors**

Teachers and school counselors are Camp Woodbine's other largest influencers. In order for parents to find resources for children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing in public and private schools, the North Carolina "Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Statewide System of Support serves as a support to local education agencies, including charter schools, and the two schools for the deaf. Consultants for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Program are available for consultation in program planning and development, training, mentoring and technical assistance that lead to a quality education for students who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The team can also assist with questions about policy related to students who are deaf or hard of hearing" ([NC Public Schools](#)). The North Carolina Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Statewide System of Support team knows of Camp Woodbine. This word-of-mouth influencer relationship has also helped Camp Woodbine's attendance and support increase over the years.

### **"RELATIONSHIP" GROUP**

Parents are the most important, because even if they are influenced by their child's doctors, teachers and school counselors, it is ultimately up to the action of the parent whether or

not they and their child will attend Camp Woodbine.

## CONTENT

This audience wants to be informed and educated. They want to know everything there is to know about their children's condition and how they can improve their children's condition. Depending on the severity of the condition, a child may only need a hearing aid or a cochlear implant. However, if the child is near deaf or fully deaf, they must learn and grow in an environment with American Sign Language. Therefore, parents must also know this language in order to properly communicate with their child. The type of content that resonates with this audience are informational, educational, and awe-inspiring success stories.

If you were to type in "hearing impaired children in North Carolina" into Google, the top result is the nonprofit [BEGINNINGS](#), which is located in the state's capital of Raleigh. BEGINNINGS focuses their efforts on programs targeted to these [parents](#). It offers support to [professionals](#) of mental and physical health and teachers. It also offers support to [kids and teens](#), providing helpful online links and fun quizzes.

BEGINNINGS' staff members "help parents understand their rights and assist them in obtaining the qualitative services they desire for their child; provide emotional support and objective information to parents in a family-centered atmosphere; help parents feel empowered so they become informed decision makers; help parents get services they need for their child; promote early identification of hearing loss; and promote awareness of early intervention programs and the impact of early intervention services" ([BEGINNINGS](#)). BEGINNINGS also features success stories, such as a young 5-year-old girl who has had a cochlear implant since she was 1 ½ years old and has not let that stop her being a happy-go-lucky charming little girl. BEGINNINGS is actually a previous sponsor of Camp Woodbine; however, there is no mention of Camp Woodbine on their website.

The second Google results is the NC state website Division of Services for the deaf and the hard of hearing [webpage](#). The state website is more directed towards adults with videos about emergency preparedness and telebraille service, as well as how to find a sign language interpreter. This website is more focused on preparing those that are deaf and hard of hearing for emergencies.

Not until the fourth link do you find something else related to hearing-impaired children, and it's the North Carolina Public School State Board of Education [webpage](#). It supplies a list of public, charter, and private schools that offer services to support hearing-impaired children. The [webpage](#) does offer a link for information for parents and caregivers. The resources are either national organizations or outdated links, except for BEGINNINGS, which is the top Google result, and another link called [The CARE Project](#).

The CARE Project was not listed on the first, second or third page of the Google search results. However, The CARE Project has [partnered](#) with Camp Woodbine in the past, and is again this year, as a sponsor for Camp Woodbine's annual event, which it's mentioned on its website. The CARE Project features something special—shared video experiences of families sharing their stories of hardship, inspiration, and support. These film segments bring a sense of “comfort to parents with the realization that they are not alone, not broken, not isolated, that their child is not unique and that there is support to be found amongst those families who share in these experiences” ([The CARE Project](#)). The CARE Project offers multiple local events in the Raleigh area, including [galas](#), [courses](#) and [retreats](#), which is all what Camp Woodbine embodies.

A parent looking online for support to care for his/her hearing impaired child in North Carolina will automatically be drawn to BEGINNINGS and The CARE Project. Unless parents do some real digging, Camp Woodbine will not be known to them. Therefore, creating content such as the examples BEGINNINGS and The CARE Project offer will increase Camp

Woodbine's chances being found easier on Google from strategic SEO keyword content; therefore, increasing its online presence and thus increasing its online engagement. Camp Woodbine can do so by implementing similar tactics BEGINNINGS and The CARE Project has used.

## **CHANNELS**

[Facebook](#) is the only social media channel with the most mentions of Camp Woodbine. Parents, volunteers and sponsors from previous annual events have shared photos and location mentions of Camp Woodbine, which has created an unofficial page. Camp Woodbine does not have an official Facebook page; they share the [Facebook page](#) of Carolina Ear & Hearing Clinic. It makes sense to stay on the social media channel that has the most presence already. It also helps that "three-quarters of online parents use Facebook, as do 70% of non-parents. Mothers are more likely to use Facebook than fathers, with 81% of moms and 66% of dads using the platform" ([Duggan et al., 2015](#)).

We do have the resources and expertise to manage this channel. It's owners run the Carolina Ear & Hearing Clinic Facebook page, and under a new tech-savvy team, Camp Woodbine's online presence could increase enough to foster engagement with parents of hearing impaired children. In the future, I propose Camp Woodbine extends its reach to Instagram and Twitter where more great content can be shared and can reach more families with children hard-of-hearing. However, at this time, Camp Woodbine does not have the man power to manage more than one channel.

## **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

One KPI showing the success of this online engagement plan is the increase in online impressions, likes and clicks on Camp Woodbine's Facebook page and website. Another KPI is the increase in registration forms for the annual event in October.

In past registration forms, Camp Woodbine has included “how did you hear about us?” We could include it in this year’s form again and see how many say Facebook, Google, The CARE Project, BEGINNINGS, etc. Another way to measure whether or not this program is working is if Camp Woodbine receives more donations and requests for partnerships/sponsorships. This will offer great data for evaluating the success of this online engagement program.

## **RISKS & CHALLENGES**

### **Risks**

A possible risk to this online engagement plan is taking the time and effort to revamp Camp Woodbine’s website and Facebook page, as well as create content. The solution to this possible risk is outsourcing if Camp Woodbine does not have the time or manpower to sustain such an online presence. Camp Woodbine currently outsources for the creation and hosting of its website. Why not also for its Facebook page?

### **Challenges**

A possible challenge Camp Woodbine faces in increasing its online engagement is creating strategic content with smart SEO to be able to be easily found on Google for parents of hearing-impaired children. The solution to this possible challenge is looking at Camp Woodbine’s partners, sponsors and competitors such as BEGINNINGS and The CARE Project. Is there anything on those websites that Camp Woodbine can utilize as a guide?

## **WHY THIS WILL WORK**

I think Camp Woodbine will be able to achieve its goals under the management of Carolina Ear & Hearing Clinic/Research Institute. Alone, Camp Woodbine might have the budget, but not the manpower to increase its online engagement. I think the most difficult part will be sustaining the Facebook page. Once Camp Woodbine has posted informative and

valuable content with strategic SEO keywords on its website, it doesn't have to worry about that anymore.

The most time-consuming aspect of this online engagement program will be its Facebook page. Allowing the majority of Carolina Ear & Hearing Clinic/Research Institute employees to be able to create Facebook posts will make it easier on Camp Woodbine. However, a social media networking contract needs to be drafted and signed by all those who are willing to help support Camp Woodbine's Facebook page in order to prevent any unforeseen risks and challenges.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, in order to increase Camp Woodbine's online engagement, we must first increase its online presence through improving its website, creating an official Facebook page, posting content with strategic SEO keywords on the website and Facebook page and fostering a relationship with parents and doctors of hearing-impaired children. Increasing Camp Woodbine's online engagement will improve its awareness for parents with hearing-impaired children; therefore, increasing attendance and financial support in its annual events to come.

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