



Case Study:

Outsourced Marketing for Christian Non-Profit Organizations

OVERVIEW

A Christian non-profit organization contracted Dogwood to become its outsourced marketing department. This case study details the transition, services, processes, and results.

CLIENT

The WMU Foundation is a Southern Baptist nonprofit that vitally supports WMU Baptist missions and related causes. The foundation provides opportunities for individuals to engage with missions by offering numerous funds and endowments that contribute to WMU ministry, women's leadership development, anti-human trafficking efforts, camp discipleship, and more.

GOALS

- To alleviate the strain of in-house marketing efforts and provide a cohesive branded marketing strategy
- To increase awareness of the client's mission and ministry through impactful, purpose-driven digital marketing strategies.
- To provide high-quality communication and customer service skills to the client

OPPORTUNITY

The WMU Foundation sought to streamline and strengthen all areas of its marketing efforts. Outsourced marketing was the key to allowing them to focus more on their mission and ministry while strengthening their online presence. Through effective communication between the WMU Foundation and Dogwood, the two would work cohesively to accomplish their goals.

SERVICES PROVIDED

- New Website design and build
- Continued website maintenance and content updates
- Marketing strategy for the foundation's needs
- Updated branding
- Full-service design for social media, digital campaigns, and marketing collateral
- Social Media Creation and Management
- SEO
- Reporting
- Press releases
- Monthly email newsletter
- Design and Print materials as needed

EXECUTION & RESULTS

UPDATED BRANDING

Outsourced marketing services began for the WMU Foundation with a rebranding initiative. After meeting and discussing the vision, mission, and purpose, our graphic design team began work. Below is a quote shared when the rebranding was presented to the client. Our rebranding designs were enthusiastically approved.

"The goal was to create something modern and clean but with a nod to the past. We did this by incorporating the torch imagery and shaping it into that iconic football shape found throughout the brand's history.

One of the big takeaways from our design meeting was the desire to emphasize the stability, consistency, and reliability of the WMU Foundation, and we hope this logo does that. As far as colors go, we tried to choose colors that drew a definite connection between National WMU and the WMU Foundation while still maintaining your unique identity."



WEB BUILDING SERVICES & WEB CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Once the new branding was established, Dogwood was tasked with creating a new website. This WordPress site includes faster load times, a responsive design to fit the variety of devices used to access it, and integration of their giving platform, DonorBox, and increased security.

After working with the client to create the look, feel, and functionality they needed, the website was launched around two months after planning began. This turnaround time was largely due to our exceptional client communication during the design and planning phases.

In addition to launching the new website, Dogwood maintains the website content updates through emails and monthly meetings with the client. A simple email with web content additions is needed for most updates, and planning meetings take place for larger projects as needed. The majority of these meetings happen online, with the occasional in-person meeting.





CLIENT RESPONSE TO DOGWOOD'S WEBSITE SERVICES

Dogwood was instrumental in helping us launch a new website and online giving processor for Giving Tuesday. While there were technology glitches beyond our and Dogwood's control, I was consistently reassured that they would be resolved because I knew that Brian and his team were working alongside us, albeit a hundred plus miles away, to find the solution

Peggy Darby
President, WMU Foundation

MARKETING STRATEGY IDENTIFIED

Dogwood identified and developed a comprehensive marketing strategy tailored to the specific needs of the WMU Foundation. By leveraging the expertise of our web designers, developers, marketing strategists, social media marketers, and SEO specialists, we crafted a multifaceted approach aimed at helping the client achieve their goals. The following key components of our marketing strategy were identified and implemented to reinforce the brand and mission of the WMU Foundation:

1. **Social Media Engagement:** We created a series of social media posts designed to consistently reinforce the WMU Foundation's brand and mission. These posts focus on the foundation's commitment to supporting WMU, Baptist missions, and various related causes while showcasing donor contributions' impact. By maintaining an active and engaging presence on social media platforms, we aim to strengthen the foundation's connection with its existing audience and attract new followers.
2. **Donor Education and Engagement:** A key component of our strategy was highlighting how donors can contribute to the foundation. We emphasized opportunities to support Christian ministries, establish or contribute to endowments, and fund scholarships that resonate with donors' values. We aimed to deepen the relationship with current donors through targeted content while encouraging new supporters to engage with the foundation.
3. **Promotion of Innovative Giving Opportunities:** We promoted new and diverse ways to support the WMU Foundation, including peer-to-peer fundraising initiatives, participation in the Walk of Faith, and opportunities for Planned Giving. By introducing and highlighting these giving options, we aimed to offer donors a variety of avenues to contribute in meaningful ways, thereby increasing overall donor participation and satisfaction.

Through these strategic efforts, Dogwood ensured that the WMU Foundation was well-positioned to achieve its marketing and fundraising objectives while continuing to fulfill its mission of supporting Christian ministries and empowering donors to make a lasting impact.

CLIENT RESPONSE TO DOGWOOD'S MARKETING STRATEGY AND EXECUTION

“Because Dogwood Media assigns a staff member to work one-on-one with us we don't have to worry about which staff person will handle which marketing assignment. Knowing that we can email, or call, our client representative and know that she will be the one working with the rest of the Dogwood creative team to make our ideas a reality is a true luxury! Another benefit in outsourcing to Dogwood is knowing that they take your ideas seriously and will guide you through the thought process of the idea. They help you understand how they can make your marketing dreams a reality without breaking your budget.”

Peggy Darby

President, WMU Foundation



CLIENT RESPONSE TO DOGWOOD'S COLLABORATIVE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

“I have to remind myself that Dogwood Media Solutions is an outsourced vendor and not a regular member of our staff. They have taken the time to understand our mission, goals and vision and to ensure that we stay on message in all that we do. They have created for us a brand that extends beyond printed materials. The look and feel of our website, social media posts, and marketing collateral presents a level of professionalism that garners attention from our ministry partners, as well as current and potential donors. They have created a persona for our organization that will allow us to continue to expand our ministry and increase our Kingdom impact for years to come.”

Peggy Darby

President, WMU Foundation



FULL-SERVICE GRAPHIC DESIGN

Once the updated branding was established, we incorporated the brand guidelines into all graphic design work, including social media images, digital campaigns, and marketing collateral.

SOCIAL MEDIA CREATION AND MANAGEMENT

The WMU Foundation partnered with Dogwood Media Solutions to enhance its social media strategy and ensure it aligns more closely with its mission. Our initial meeting was instrumental in deepening our understanding of the various ministries, endowments, scholarships, and investment services the WMU Foundation offers. This collaboration allowed us to work with the foundation staff to design a yearly marketing calendar highlighting specific endowments and scholarships each month, ensuring a focused and organized approach to their promotion.

A key aspect of our strategy was to tell the impactful stories of donors and illustrate how the Foundation has significantly influenced their lives. By sharing these personal narratives, we aimed to create a more engaging and relatable social media presence that resonates with the community and underscores the Foundation's mission. Through these efforts, Dogwood Media Solutions has helped the WMU Foundation refocus on its mission, strengthen its brand, and effectively communicate the transformative power of its work to a broader audience.

CLIENT RESPONSE TO DOGWOOD'S SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING SERVICES

“Dogwood has played a major if not central, role in increasing our social media presence and ensuring that our posts are relevant and on-message with our fundraising focus for the month. They are also dialed into what is happening in the world and ensure that we are making posts relevant to issues impacting our work and ministry.”

Peggy Darby
President, WMU Foundation

MEDIA CAMPAIGNS & PRINT SERVICES

The WMU Foundation partnered with Dogwood Media Solutions to enhance its media and print campaigns, aligning its communications more closely with its mission in the Baptist missions community. Our collaboration began with a comprehensive review of their branding and storytelling, enabling us to streamline their messaging for two major annual giving campaigns, Missions Matters Most and Giving Tuesday. By revitalizing their monthly newsletter, we successfully expanded their audience and increased engagement among supporters. Additionally, we designed various print materials, including ads for Mission Mosaic magazines and other marketing collateral, ensuring the updated branding was professional and eye-catching. This approach not only captured the attention of current donors but also attracted new ones. Through this partnership, Dogwood Media Solutions has empowered the WMU Foundation to amplify its mission, effectively showcase its initiatives, and foster deeper connections within its community.

As part of the WMU Foundation and WMU's "Missions Matters Most" campaign, we designed a 4-page insert for Mission Mosaic magazine. The insert highlights the Vision Fund, showcasing how it sustains WMU's mission for the future, and outlines options for becoming a monthly supporter. This strategic piece engages donors to ensure ongoing support for WMU's impactful work.

SEO SERVICES

The WMU Foundation sought Dogwood's SEO services to help improve their current Google rankings and increase organic traffic. While this work is still in its early stages, we have begun to see improvements in rankings and rises in organic traffic through our efforts.

After a consultation, we learned more about all the services and ministries the WMU Foundation offers and crafted a keyword strategy from there. In addition to the brand-specific keywords (e.g., "WMU Foundation scholarships" and "WMU endowments"), we identified specific niche keywords with lower search volume but higher search intent. In other words, the keywords we target may not have many people searching for them, but the ones searching for them are ready to take action.

SEO work began in January 2024. Services include monthly web page optimizations, keyword research and ranking monitoring, a monthly technical site audit to correct or improve technical performance, and a monthly report with easy-to-understand data. The nuances of the Christian nonprofit giving seasons play a role in website traffic. We see spikes in traffic in the holiday season, the end of the year, and April.

We look forward to truly comparing the data after completing one year of SEO work to evaluate our efforts.

THE SEO SHORT-TERM RESULTS

SEO efforts are the long game in increasing organic traffic and ranking but benefit from established, consistent results when done well. In the short season we have been working SEO with WMU Foundation, we are pleased with where we are headed. Comparing the data from February 1- March 31 to April 1—May 31, we have seen a 1.41k increase in impressions, several of our target keywords rising to page 1, and others gaining rank.

CONCLUSION

Peggy Darby, President of WMU Foundation, shared these final thoughts regarding the partnership of WMU Foundation with Dogwood as their outsourced marketing department:

“Making the decision to contract with Dogwood Media Solutions to serve as our outsourced marketing team has been a wonderful decision. Hiring Brian and his firm has allowed us to benefit from the creative synergy of his team of marketing/communications professionals and has given us more time to focus on the other aspects of our mission. In addition, not having to worry about the day-to-day management of our social media presence and website has alleviated the stress that was on our team to manage those marketing tools.”

The partnership between Dogwood and WMU Foundation has been a beautiful thing. By clearly defining our initial goals for the client, we were able to truly become their outsourced marketing department. Communication between the client and our company has been streamlined and strong. The client has more time to dedicate to their own services while trusting Dogwood to complete our services on their behalf. The result is a consistent branding and message across all channels of communication, timely updates and technical support, as well as proactive initiatives to ensure continued growth.