

Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance

Secondary Research and SWOT Analysis

A: Executive Summary

The Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance strives to establish a forum for the community to coordinate and enhance emergency management and preparedness in Central Virginia. Efforts to better help the client with this goal involve research of media coverage, resources, key publics, socio-economic context and general industry research - all of which contribute to the SWOT analysis, which analyzes the organization's internal strengths and weaknesses as well as the external opportunities and threats.

CVEMA's goal of improving situational awareness in Central Virginia opens their media coverage to a variety of topics including emergency awareness and preparedness, and newsworthy coverage of similar organizations with a likewise goal. While the organization lacks media coverage as a whole, there is a variety of coverage on emergency preparedness in the Virginia area, including information on emergency preparedness month, what emergencies to look out for and what local communities are doing to improve emergency preparedness in the area.

In order to have a clear understanding of all different types of strategies, research was conducted on smaller volunteer based organizations, and larger or government funded organizations with the same basic mission as the client. Based on the research conducted, many of the competing organizations follow a very similar format to their online websites. Since these organizations have a wide audience to appeal to, they kept their websites simple and easy to navigate. Most of the competing organizations have a very strong social media presence, making posts weekly.

All of the research for this client was done online. These sources include: Hampton Roads Planning District, Ready Hampton Roads, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ready.gov, and Federal Emergency Management Alliance

These sources were chosen because the online atmosphere is one of the best ways to see what organizations do. An organization online presence reflects a lot of information about how the individual organizations work.

According to research done on social, political, and economic context, Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance is in an advantageous geographic region. They are surrounded by the types of people that they will want to target. The Central Virginia region has all age groups and high-income level groups, which is best for their type of organization.

All of the research for this client was done online. The sources used to conduct this research include the Federal Emergency Management Alliance and Ready.gov

These sources were chosen because the online atmosphere is one of the best ways to see what organizations do. An organization online presence reflects a lot of information about how the individual organizations work. These sources were found by conducting research of other organizations with a similar mission in other areas.

The following research is essential to understanding the organization's strengths and weaknesses. By evaluating the current state of the Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance, the organization can move forward with creating user-friendly content that will attract the key public and build their brand.

B: Client Background/ Communication efforts/ Resources

Client: Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance

- The goal of Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance is to improve situational awareness in central Va and to provide a place to share ideas and lessons learned while creating partnerships to leverage grant funding for regional projects.
- CVEMA is a voluntary group of local emergency managers and partner organizations from 25 localities in Central Va.
- Those localities included are Amelia, Brunswick, Caroline, Charles City, Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Emporia, Essex, Goochland, Greenville, Hanover, Henrico, Hopewell, King and Queen, King William, Louisa, New Kent, Nottoway, Petersburg, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond and Sussex.
- Their office is located in Richmond.

Resources

CVEMA has a variety of communication resources to aid their mission of providing a forum for community members to collaborate, coordinate and enhance emergency management and preparedness in Central Virginia. The organization currently has resources such as social media, an online website, a print brochure.

1. CVEMA's presence on Facebook and Twitter is indicative of their desire to expand their reach in the community. By having a Facebook and Twitter, the organization strives to put out relevant and timely information regarding emergency preparedness and generate

interactive dialogue between emergency preparedness officials and the applicable publics. Currently, their outdated social media lacks the reach necessary to effectively communicate with key publics. Lack of timely posts, up-to-date content and engaging materials greatly hinders their ability to communicate via social media, however; this is a resource that if used properly, could greatly enhance CVEMA's goal.

2. CVEMA's website, <http://www.richmondregional.org/CVEMA> includes their mission statement, maps of their target areas, contact information and applicable links to various other emergency preparedness organizations. CVEMA's website is fairly easy to navigate, includes an interactive map and is user-friendly. However; their website is not mobile friendly, an essential component of interactive websites in 2015. The website could use updating in their formatting to be more appealing and modern by including graphics, a sleek and simple design and more relevant content such as a feed of their Twitter, Facebook, and also relevant media coverage.

3. CVEMA's print brochure; The Citizens Emergency Preparedness Guide is a tangible resource that if used effectively, can be of great use to the organization. If the format was updated with a more modern look, and more relevant graphics, and the content was condensed into a more eye-catching user friendly format, the brochure could effectively be used in media kits, hospitals, on the website as a PDF, etc.

4. A resource that CVEMA currently does not have, but would benefit from include a newsletter which reaches their target audiences of the general public and local emergency managers and safety officials. A short, easy to read and timely e-newsletter produced by software such as MailChimp would be greatly advantageous to the client's goals.

5. Tangible resources such as "goodies," including magnets, mugs, t-shirts would also be a great, albeit expensive resource that would generate publicity and excitement about CVEMA - a crucial part in achieving their goal. Resources as such provide incentive to the key public to "stay in the know" about CVEMA as these household items are a constant reminder of the organization.

III: How these sources were gathered:

- These sources were gathered from going to their website and Facebook page. The Preparedness guide was given to us.

IV: Findings of the client:

- CVEMA has a Facebook that they do update daily, which is a smart thing, however the only problem with that is that they only have 127 people that "like" their page. This number needs to be higher in order for more people to learn about them and what they do.

- They also have a twitter. Their twitter has 203 followers, which is more than the number of “likes” that their Facebook has. The twitter is filled with links to the Facebook posts that they do. These tweets however do not provide any information as to what the links are and where they lead to. Which could cause many people to be wary of clicking that link. They need to add in a description along with each link.
- Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance needs to have a stronger social media presence. With so much of the population having one or more form of social media it would be smart for them to work on both of their outlets.
- Their website was very bare and didn’t provide much info about them as an alliance. Many of the links that were on the website were old links and outdated. One positive aspect of their website is that on the map on the main page it is interactive meaning that you can click on the county and then it take you to their website.
- The Citizens Emergency Preparedness Guide has tips about everything that you need to know to get ready for any disasters and what to do afterwards. This guide is more geared towards an older crowd and not towards a younger generation. All age groups need to be prepared and this guide is too “wordy” and lengthy.
- CVEMA also does a day called “Disaster Survivor Day” and has a separate website for this event. This site however is extremely bare and does not provide much information as to when the actual event is. You can register for the event but it does not say when it is held or even if this is an ongoing thing with the organization.

C. Key Publics

Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance targets publics specifically located in the Central Virginia region.

This area includes the following counties:

- Louisa County around 34,000 in population
- Caroline County including Fort AP Hill around 29,000 in population
- Essex County around 789,000 in population
- Goochland County around 21,000 in population
- Hanover County around 101,000 in population
- King William County around 16,000 in population
- Cumberland County around 10,000 in population
- King and Queen County around 7,000 in population
- Powhatan County around 28,000 in population
- Richmond County around 927,000 in population
- New Kent County around 20,000 in population
- Henrico County around 306,000 in population

- Amelia County around 12,000 in population
 - Chesterfield County around 332,000 in population
 - Charles City County around 7,000 in population
 - Colonial Heights County around 17,000 in population
 - Hopewell County around 22,000 in population
 - Petersburg County around 32,000 in population
 - Prince George County including Fort Lee around 37,000 in population
 - Nottoway including Fort Pickett around 15,000 in population
 - Dinwiddie County around 27,000 in population
 - Sussex County around 12,000 in population
 - Brunswick County around 16,000 in population
 - Greensville County around 12,000 in population
 - Emporia County around 5,000 in population
- The information was gathered from our client's website and other sites like the census bureau to find the population of the key public. The total population that we face in Central Virginia is roughly about 2,806,000 million.
 - These sources were gathered to help better identify what geographical area our client serves which will better help us to understand who the key publics are and how to better reach them.
 - These sources were gathered by getting familiar with our clients website, and searching more about the areas that our client aims to target
 - From research and the information gathered about our client, there seems to be no clear mission statement or goal, and no targeted public. Although our client should aim to lock down on what their true mission is, they should play on the fact that their services don't cater to only one area or group of people.
 - Our client should market to all demographics. Emergency preparedness is needed by all age groups. It would be beneficial for the client to hold workshops for children, or create a hotline if they don't already have one.

D: Social/Political/Economic Context

When observing the social, political, and economic context that affect the client, the

Social:

- *Age and Population*- Based on research from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the most prepared age group are individuals between 18 and 54. Some of the perceived barriers from this age group is the assumption of assistance from emergency responders. Trends found in the 18 to 54 age group shows that individuals in the younger versus older group are in different stages of change. Individuals in the 35 and 54 age group tend to be in the "action" stage, meaning they are more willing and prepared to take the initiative to make a plan and

follow through with that plan. Individuals in the 18 to 34 age group tend to be in the “precontemplation” stage, meaning that they are aware of the issues but are not actively making effort to make a plan. The largest age group in the surrounding counties that the client serves is the 18-64 age group.

- *Communities-* Based on research of the communities that the client serves, a majority of the areas it reaches out to would be considered suburban. Following research from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, suburban areas tended to be the least likely to have participated in any kind of volunteer work or training pertaining to emergency/disaster preparedness. Rural areas tend to report being the most active and preparing for disaster and the most confident in their skills. Urban areas followed after rural.

- **Economic:**

- *Income-* Based on a research survey by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the data presents that as income went up, so did level of preparedness. Families and individuals with incomes of \$50,000 or more were more likely than those with a lesser income to have disaster supplies in their cars, a household disaster plan, communicated this plan with others, volunteered to help in a disaster, taken a preparedness training or CPR course, communicated the importance of preparing to someone else, and believe that preparedness would actually help them handle a disaster situation. The average household income of the counties in Central Virginia that the client serves is around \$60,000.

- **Political:**

Government funded organizations- Government funded emergency management organizations are competition for the client. Organizations such as Read.gov and Virginia Department of Emergency Management have more resources to work with because of their funding. They are able to have an advantage over smaller organizations such as the client.

E: Industry Research

The Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance is one among many volunteer organizations all over the country that strive to raise awareness and preparedness to citizens in the event of a disaster. Like its competitors in the industry, CVEMA uses online outlets such as their website, and various types of social media to spread the word about their organization and its workings. Research was done on organizations that are smaller like CVEMA, and also larger organizations to compare strategies. These competitors include; Hampton Roads District Planning Commission, Ready Hampton Roads, Virginia Department of Emergency Management, and The Red Cross.

When conducting the research, it seemed that all the competitors being analyzed had a very modern, and active presence in all their online outlets.

Hampton Roads District Planning Commission <http://www.hrpdcva.gov/>

-Website

- Modern and professional looking
- Easy to navigate with clearly labeled sections
- Access to news tab on home page. Easy to see
- Video posted about emergency preparedness
- Separate, labeled tab for hazard mitigation plan

-Social Media

- Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, YouTube
- Not using social media to the fullest extent
- Twitter and Facebook pages just include a link to the website

Ready Hampton Roads <http://www.readyhamptonroads.org/>

-Website

- Most modern and up-to-date with trends of all websites researched
- Bright colors to appeal to the eye
- Very simple and minimal
- Easy vertical tabs with pictures. Appealing to the eye and right on the homepage. Don't need to do a lot of navigating
- Alerts and warnings feed available right on homepage

-Social Media

- Live twitter feed on the homepage to easily connect viewers to tweets
- Twitter- 167 followers
- Tweets not up to date last post being in February 2015
- No presence on Facebook

Virginia Department of Emergency Management <http://www.vaemergency.gov/volunteer>

-Website

- Banner at the top of homepage that rotates different alert photo reminders
- Access to news stories right when website homepage is pulled up
- Calendar with training dates for emergency preparedness
- Pictures and videos
- Easy and noticeable link to social media

-Social Media

- Facebook, Twitter, YouTube

- Facebook: 25,000 likes. Very active posting several times a week. Lots of pictures, videos, and articles. All information about the organization
- Twitter: 17,000 followers. Posting several times a week. Access to links to articles, job/volunteer opportunities, and news updates
- YouTube: Webinars on various emergency preparedness how-to's

Red Cross <http://www.redcross.org>

-Website

- Simple and easy to navigate
- Clearly stated links to show planning and preparation methods, ways to help, etc.
- All media posted on the website
- Social media links right on homepage

-Social Media

- Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr
- Facebook: Very active posting several times a week. Videos and pictures included in most posts.
- Twitter: 2.5 million followers. Active posting several time a week. Photos and hastags used
- YouTube: videos with various subjects. "Glimpse into the Red Cross" and Videos of victims who have been helped by the red cross

F. Analysis of Competition and/or Similar Organizations:

I. Sources used in this section:

- [EM Alliance](#), which is a partnership for Disaster Planning and Recovery based out of Albuquerque, New Mexico.
 - EM Alliance consist of partnerships formed by a variety of leaders from different sectors such as emergency medical services, risk management, fire and life safety and more. These different sectors work together to help with disaster planning, how to respond to it, mitigate it and recover in case of emergencies
- [EMAI](#)- Emergency Management Alliance of Indiana
 - This alliance for the state of Indiana
 - EMAI's mission is to advance the profession of emergency management through implementation of the importance of emergency management profession through rising awareness and understanding of how important it is
- [NEMA](#)- National Emergency Management Association
 - Is the professional association of emergency management directors
 - Consist of all 50 states, eight territories and the District of Columbia

- NEMA is the source of information, expertise and support

- [American Red Cross](#)- Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Alliance(DPRA)

- Their mission is to network and share information about emergency planning, training and disaster recovery

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management ([VDEM](#))

- Works with local, state and federal government, agencies, and voluntary organizations.
- They help provide resources and knowledge by using the four phases of emergency management

- [Central](#) Virginia All Hazards Management Team

- This team helps communities and support agencies during major emergencies or planned events. They are in place to assist
- Secondary sources were used. Information was gathered from similar organizations across the United States, to help improve Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance.
- These organizations all have one thing in common: how to prepare for emergencies, before, during and after
- Information was gathered from local alliances, but also national alliances such as NEMA.

II. Why these sources were chosen:

- Each source brings a different element to the table
- The Virginia Department of Emergency Management's website has very helpful information and resources, which can be used to improve CVEMA website
- Other sources such as, Central Virginia All Hazards Management Team and EMAI, shows what CVEMA does not want to do. There are some useful information, but the websites lacks substance.

III. Discuss how sources were gathered:

- The sources were gathered through research done online. Searching the web for similar organizations and alliances, comparing CVEMA's website and facebook page to them.

IV. Findings of the client:

- Compared to other websites, CVEMA should invest in a graphic designer to update their page and make it more user friendly
- A calendar will be useful, to show upcoming events or indicate high risk times of the year for example hurricane season
- On CVEMA's homepage there should be links to their facebook page
- Twitter and a monthly or weekly blog should also be added to the website
- Sending out an e-newsletter on a monthly basis might be beneficial, with emergency preparedness tips and other useful information

- A “stay informed” link should be on the home page, where people can sign up for alerts via email or text
- EM Alliance’s website is a good model to follow for CVEMA
- The following [link](#) should be added to the website and to their social media. This enables each family to make their own emergency plan so that they are prepared

V. Statistics from the American Red Cross showing how important and helpful emergency management organizations are during disasters. Organizations such as CVEMA help the public to be prepared for disasters, but also help them during and after disasters.

G: CVEMA Media Coverage

I. The Central Virginia Emergency Management Alliance strives to establish a forum for local emergency managers, public safety officials, federal, state, regional, private sector, higher education and non-profit partners to collaborate, coordinate and enhance emergency management and preparedness in Central Virginia. Their goal of improving situational awareness in Central Virginia opens their media coverage to a variety of topics including emergency awareness and preparedness, and newsworthy coverage of similar organizations with a likewise goal.

The research process lead to the discovery of various organizations similar to CVEMA, including;

- Virginia Capital Region Red Cross
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management
- Central Virginia All Hazards Incident Management Team.

All of the organizations listed strive to provide their communities with the knowledge and skills needed to prepare for disasters, a similar goal to the CVEMA.

In researching media coverage, there seemed to be a general lack of media specifically about the CVEMA. Media coverage was more issue-centric, focusing on the general issue of emergency preparedness and concentrating on timely and newsworthy sub-topics within that same issue.

Sources used in finding media coverage include;

- NBC29
- Potomac Local
- Daily Progress
- The Richmond Times Dispatch
- WTVR
- WBOY-TV

These credible sources either cater to the target demographic of Virginians, or they have done newsworthy pieces about emergency preparedness. All of the media coverage found below could

be of interest to the client because of its central issue of emergency preparedness. By gathering and analyzing the following media coverage, the client can get a better idea of what is currently being broadcasted to the public, and what they as an organization need to do to increase their notoriety and public perception.

Sept. is preparedness month in VA

(<http://www.nbc29.com/story/29944528/governor-mcauliffe-declares-september-as-preparedness-month-in-virginia>)

- Gov. Terry McAuliffe is urging citizens, business owners, communities and families to take steps to be ready for emergencies
- “September has historically been the most active time of the year for hurricanes in Virginia,” McAuliffe said. “Whether it’s a natural disaster like a hurricane or a human-caused emergency like terrorism, individuals, families and businesses that take the time to prepare are more resilient in the long run than those who failed to plan.”
- Contact listed at bottom of the article: Get a free emergency plan worksheet and emergency contact cards at www.ReadyVirginia.gov or www.ListoVirginia.gov or use the new Ready Virginia app. (VDEM)

Virginia eyes tropical storm Erika

<http://potomaclocal.com/2015/08/28/virginia-eyes-tropical-storm-erika/>

- According to VDEM, the tropical storm Erika could be coming to Virginia -- currently in the Dominican Republic. The storm is expected to hit the Southeast US in the upcoming week.

Central Virginia firefighters learn new extrication techniques - (article they shared on their Facebook)

(http://www.dailyprogress.com/news/local/central-va-firefighters-learn-new-extrication-techniques/article_a5bf0d00-5100-11e5-8d8c-277edd0bc88a.html)

- Firefighters from several departments in Central Virginia, including Charlottesville Fire Department, Ruckersville Volunteer Fire Company, Orange Volunteer Fire Company and Staunton Fire and Rescue, learned how and where to cut vehicles open in order to rescue a trapped victim.

More coastal nuisance flooding forecast for coming months

http://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/ap/article_3c80631f-14a4-545d-a2bd-631e6e6a2e31.html

- Flooding is a serious problem for Virginia during this time of the year. Coastal flooding has been forecasted for the upcoming months along the Virginia Coast, and it is important for Virginians to be aware and prepared and take precautions when it comes to their house, cars and other belongings which could be affected by flooding.

Emergency training at Busch Gardens not a response to current threat

<http://wtvr.com/2015/09/09/busch-gardens-williamsburg-regional-training-exercise/>

- To comply with emergency preparedness month in Virginia, Busch Gardens is having a regional training exercise with first responders and law enforcement to prepare for an emergency situation. This regional training exercise may alarm some tourists, but it is merely training for emergency situations.

Red Cross Asking For Blood Donations During National Preparedness Month

<http://www.wboy.com/story/29994280/red-cross-asking-for-blood-donations-during-national-preparedness-month>

- The Virginia Red Cross is asking for blood donations during September, national preparedness month. The Red Cross encourages community members to be mindful of opportunities to donate blood for those who most need it.
- **Their office is located in Richmond.**

<u>Strengths(Internal)</u>	<u>Weakness(Internal)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having the links to applicable localities as part of their interactive Central VA map allows users to visually grasp the wide scope of CVEMA. - Our client can draw on the fact that it caters to a large part of Central Virginia including metropolitan Richmond which is a progressive area and the largest population of clients focused in one area. - The employees at CVEMA have a good understanding of what the organization is about and who they cater to. Their print materials are indicative of their wide scope of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CVEMA’s lack of up-to-date social media hinders their ability to communicate effectively with target audiences. By creating a more modern and timely social media presence, CVEMA could increase their online presence and create a more interactive, user friendly forum. - The client’s website needs updating on both the design and content - numerous links on the website were extremely outdated. This could lead some to think that the CVEMA is no longer active - The information booklet is important, yet quite text heavy. They could condense the info and present it in a more appealing way. - It appears that they have fewer resources than others. They do not take advantage of their online presence like many similar organizations do. - The organization is not clear with their mission - what exactly they want to do and who exactly they want to reach. If they had clear goals that were made public to their audience, the organization would be able to better represent itself.

<u>Opportunities(External)</u>	<u>Threats(External)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Take /advantage of the social media trends and increase following to encourage better use of programs and services -They could take advantage of a trendy graphic design and create a new logo to begin a rebranding process -Offer more classes on emergency preparedness . - Work together with similar organizations such as Virginia Red Cross. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The younger demographic feels apathetic towards emergency preparedness and are therefore less likely to follow CVEMA. - Lack of finances hinders the organization as a whole, as they are not able to pay for the proper coverage or materials need to publicize themselves.

I: Define 3 major problems:

I: Present Three Major Issues

- Three major issues that Central Virginia Emergency Alliance has is lack of a strong social media presence, not appealing to all age ranges and not a very clear mission statement.

II: Discuss why you chose those three issues based in your secondary research and SWOT analysis

- These three issues were picked because it was clear that the other alliances and teams that were researched had much better social media presences, looked as though they did appeal to all age ranges and it was clear just exactly what their alliance, team or organization was about.

