

Nego Gato Inc.
Executive Summary
Student Consultant, Scott McCaffrey
Community Partner, Vivian Revis

I. Background Information

Nego Gato is a Non-Profit organization located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They're a small local organization with related branches across the country. Their mission is:

To reach out to the global community through education on and demonstration of the African-Brazilian arts such as Capoeira.

They accomplish these goals through a variety of programs that take in people of all ages and backgrounds. These programs seek to educate people on the martial-arts dance, Capoeira. Another facet of Nego Gato is countrywide performances often featuring their founder, Jose Sena.

When I first came to Nego Gato in February, the organization had recently lost a number of its core employees leaving only Vivian Revis. It seems fair to say that at that point in time, technology was hindering as much as helping. The backup system had stopped functioning, one of the two computers was locked, and the website was becoming dated with no feasible way of updating it anytime soon. We first sought to tackle these problems and bring Nego Gato back to its former state, and from there we pushed forward using technology to our advantage.

II. Consulting Tasks

Vivian and I divided up the tasks into two major categories, the first of which is Technical Organization. In this task we tried to restore functionality to the systems that had fallen into disrepair after the technical staff had left. Step one was to unlock the Macintosh, and assess the damage to its contents. Luckily for us, none of its data was lost, but its backup drive had failed. Over the course of the semester we attempted to not only rehabilitate the use of these technologies, but to also put in place safeguards so that such scenarios don't present themselves again.

The second of the two major tasks was to update the website, and to allow it to continue to be updated even after my departure. Having an up to date and professional looking website is a great way to leverage technology to meet their mission statement. The website is a modern way to advertise both their performances and classes, and the more people they reach with their message, the better. We sought to accomplish this goal by training Vivian to access the website herself, and make the changes necessary.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

Most of the activities of the Technical Organization task were wrapped up about halfway through the program. The Macintosh was unlocked and all the files salvaged. To prevent a recurrence, we're now using a password management system. This system is intentionally simple, as a bulky system would be susceptible to falling into disuse, and failure itself. As for the backup system, board members intervened before we could implement it. However, this gave me the opportunity to teach Vivian enough technical details to be able to convince the board that this

system is necessary, and that the route we proposed is the most feasible. This decision is still pending, but I remain confident that it will come through.

The website will remain a work in progress even after my departure, as it should. Were we to update it one time while I was at Nego Gato, the same problem would arise in mere months. What has happened is now Vivian has the tools and the know-how to make the changes as she sees fit. She has become very adept at updating pages, and is even more eager to learn. As of now she has updated each of the tabs on the current website, and plans to present her changes to the board. One potential issue is that Nego Gato may be getting a new webhost and designer in the upcoming months. While on a material level this may erase much of the work we've done, on a skill and knowledge level it will have no effect.

In leaving I wanted to give Nego Gato a recommendation on how to continue to expand their use of technology. This is to use Skype as a substitute for board meetings. This would greatly help with both costs and frequency, as currently the board is often spread out across the country, and sometimes the world. Of course the implementation will not be trivial, and I've left detailed instructions on the process of setting up such a system.

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Nego Gato Inc.

Context Analysis

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Community Partner, Vivian Revis

I. About the Organization

Organization

Nego Gato Inc. is a non-profit local to Pittsburgh but with both African and Brazilian roots. Founded by the artist Jose Sena, a.k.a Mestre Gato, the organization is involved in many activities ranging from community outreach and performances.

To reach out to the global community through education on and demonstration of the African-Brazilian arts such as Capoeira.

Recently many core members left the organization, leaving only one full time employee in the Pittsburgh office. Related entities across the country continue to tour, but local programs have been put on hold, restarting in June of 2008. Currently Nego Gato Inc. is seeking new employs in an attempt to build back up to their former self. The outlook remains optimistic, however, with recent local contacts in both the technical and artistic persuasions.

Facilities

Nego Gato Inc. has the second floor of a building just outside of downtown Pittsburgh on Fifth Avenue. In the front is a large tiled room for dancing and music. This room is covered with pictures, merchandise, and assorted instruments for use in Capoeira. In the back there is a kitchen and living quarters for programs in which people stay at the facilities. Finally there is a small office with two desks for managerial tasks. One of these desks is used by Vivian Revis and the other is for whomever needs it.

Programs

Currently all activities are on hold for Nego Gato Inc. However related companies are still operating a nationwide tour of performers and instructors which Nego Gato Inc. advertises for. During normal operation Nego Gato offers a plethora of programs. The most common is a residency that brings in youths from Pittsburgh to be taught by Mestres and Professors from Brazil. A Mestre is the highest rank one can achieve in Capoeira. The Brazilians stay at the Pittsburgh location during the residency. The students learn primarily about Capoeira, which teaches them dance, acrobatics, and martial arts. However they also learn a broad range of skills relating to Afro-Brazilian culture. They are taught Brazilian history and some Portuguese, the national language of Brazil. Also music comes up a great deal, learning Samba both through rare instruments and dance. Often these same dancers will stay with Nego Gato through other programs after their residency is finished. Other past programs are workshops and lectures on African-Brazilian history and arts. Lastly a hopeful future program is an International Exchange where residents travel to Brazil to work more on their Capoeira with locals. When this is completed, the Brazilian locals would then travel back to the U.S. to perform with the residents.

Staff

Currently the only fulltime staff in Pittsburgh is Vivian Revis, the Operations Manager. Her experience is more suited towards organization than either the arts or technology. While not an expert, she's no stranger to technology and uses her desktop a great deal for research, email, and Microsoft Office. There is also the Executive Director and founder, Mestre Jose Sena, who divides his time between Florida and Brazil. Finally there is Carol Chappel, the Director of Touring, who works out of New York.

Technical Environment

Currently there are only two computers at Nego Gato. The computer used by Vivian Revis is a PC, primarily for day-to-day operations. This PC runs Windows XP and Word 2004; granted these are not bleeding edge versions, but it is more than capable to handle the tasks required. The second is a Macintosh which in the past had been used for video and photo editing. At the beginning of the consulting project, this machine was inaccessible, as previous employees had left with their passwords. This computer is running Mac OS 10.3, which again isn't the current release but it's far from deprecated. There are also two printers, the first for general office use, and the second used for printing labels to promotional CDs and DVDs. The latter unfortunately is no longer functioning for that purpose. Lastly, the two computers and the one printer are all wired to a router.

Technical Management

At the beginning of the partnership, technology management was minimal to none at Nego Gato. Passwords have been lost for all the users on the Mac, including the administrator's. Also its install disks were missing, and Vivian had mentioned that many serial numbers were also lost. Also the password for both the wireless and the router was unknown, luckily the router password was not changed from the default and after looking it up online I was able to access the router and see the wireless password. Unfortunately these problems were only the surface to what appears to be a much more deeply rooted problem. On the other end the website was half finished by an outside company, and no one who remains with the organization knows how to update it. Vivian would like to see many cursory updates, such as updating programs, events, and improving "Contact Us" page. In the long run she would like to see a general overall of the layout and contents.

Technology Planning

A main goal for Nego Gato Inc. is to develop a solid technology plan. Already four goals have been put on paper, the first of which is the plan itself. The second is to explore future possibilities that could help all those involved in the organization. This goal is purposely broad, and hopefully will be narrowed down when the technology plan becomes more solid. Thirdly they are looking to upgrade their current infrastructure, from more current software to more functional computers. Finally, and perhaps most pressingly, Nego Gato wants to greatly expand the capabilities of their website.

Internal and External Communication

Internal communication is currently non-existent as there is only one person. External communication and communication between related organizations has also caused problems in the

past. There have been incidents of double booking of performers due to the lack of a centralized scheduler. The website also limits contact information which should be available to the public.

Information Management

Information is somewhat haphazardly stored on the computers and in a couple file cabinets. Much of their media was presumed lost when the Macintosh was locked. There are a number of files pertinent to advertising and DVDs on the computer. These include pictures of flyers, performances, and disc covers. Also there is a substantial amount of video footage. Fortunately we were able to recover everything on the internal hard drive of this computer, but anything that was on the external (hopefully just backups) was lost.

Business Systems

Currently all operations are handled by Vivian Revis, being that she is the only employee. However she is looking to hire new employees to delegate away some of the tasks that fall outside of her expertise. This summer they are expecting a number of interns from local colleges to work both on the business and artistic needs of Nego Gato.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. Technical Organization

As mentioned above, Nego Gato Inc. was crippled due to a mass exodus of full time employees. With all internal programs on hold the mission statement was certainly not being met to the extent that it could be. While restoring current functionality was certainly the priority, ensuring that the event isn't repeated was essential. This was of course a broad task comprised of many small problems, but a comprehensive solution could help Nego Gato under any circumstance

Goals and Rationale

Both Vivian and I saw these as very important tasks. Luckily most of these tasks fell well within my skill set. The real challenge came from making sure these practices continue to be carried out after my time is up. When a new hire comes in, there is certainly an urge to have them get straight to work. Making these processes as simple and short as possible not only increased productivity, but it also made their continued use much more likely. Specifically, designating administrative duties to one employee will be the most difficult to sustain. As there was only one employee, it was easy to decide who took this charge. However, in the future she may wish to assign this to someone more technically oriented.

Activity	End Goal	Rationale
Organize serial numbers and store install CDs in one designated area.	Organization and clearer understanding of software	This task helped to prevent loss of important CDs and information concerning software being used. It was made possible not only through organization, but also through understanding. Its sustainability hinges on its continued use.
Establish a protocol for setting up accounts on the office computers. Set up a means by which passwords will either be stored or inessential.	Password Management System	This tasked helped Nego Gato to get the most out of their system, with proper a proper multi-user environment. Its use will hopefully be continued with the introduction of new fulltime employees.
Decide who should administer the computers and make decisions about their use.	Proper administration of computers and routers	Designating one person to administer a computer helped the computer to be more organized as a whole, and in the future will lead to more straightforward use.
Set up a back up system either using an external hard drive or free network backup. Usability is key.	Office wide backup system	This system is a must-have of any small organization, because often the loss of one computer can lead to catastrophic results.

Additional Impacts

Initially the approach was entirely forward progress, but we knew it was not realistic to say it could always be this way. Information and Technological Management improved in leaps and bounds. However, all these extra precautions will operate as a safety net to avoid future problems, and will hopefully streamline many processes. They do add overhead to any tasks involving new staff and their acclimation to Nego Gato. I firmly believe that the initial inconvenience will easily be offset by the benefits.

Task 2. Update Website

Currently Nego Gato's website is still online, but the information is lacking and out of date. More concerning still, no one at the organization knows how to update it. What Nego Gato is looking for in this task is a new website with more functionality and the ability to keep it up to date. Specifically the addition of a web store and online sign up for classes is thought to be a necessary step. Many things can be accomplished with a professional website. Not only will it be more appealing, the information should also be more helpful thus better advertising events and classes. The website should also increase attendance at performances and programs, helping Nego Gato to better meet its mission statement. Unfortunately this falls outside the realm of my knowledge, and given the time constraints of the semester it may not be feasible. Still it's worth looking at in this report.

Goals and Rationale

This is probably the task that Nego Gato is most passionate about. Training an employee to update things like contact information and dates of performances was certainly the most feasible way to attack this goal. With proper backups and the knowledge of how to access the website through an editor, Vivian was able to explore all the possibilities that the website held.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>End Goal</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
Update the Contact Us page on the current website	Contact Us page will be up to date and more useful. Basic experience with updating the website	Not only was this task important for its benefits as an advertising medium, it was also a great way to practice a simple task on the website.
Investigate the possibility of a webstore. Ask if the cost of a web store would be offset by the sales, or if the professionalism and advertisement it adds is more	Cheap web interfaces and various web store providers exist; one of these seems to be the most likely route.	This task was a good way to start thinking of ways to expand the website in the future.

important than profit.		
Set up a template for classes and a way to sign up for them online	An online form through which it is possible to sign up for the classes	Another documented way of being able to continue to step up the website
Train someone at the organization to update the website, or look at the possibility of having it done out of organization.	Determined whether training, hiring someone new, or outsourcing the updates is the best option.	This was the unifying goal of the overall task. Not was it able to give Vivian more technical experience, it also helped Nego Gato to see that technology could be used to realize many of their goals.

Additional Impacts

A well laid out functional website could make the organization more professional. Perhaps more importantly, it allowed Nego Gato to see just how much they could do by themselves. Being able to update the website themselves adds a new level of control to how they meet their mission statement.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

I. Results of Consulting Work

Task 1: Update the website

The goal of this task is to better reach out to the community by making the website more functional. This was accomplished by giving Nego Gato the tools and understanding they needed to better control the website.

Outcomes

The means by which we accomplished this task was helping Vivian Revis of Nego Gato better understand and utilize the organization's website. While this is a lengthy task, there are parts that we wanted to be accomplished before the end of the semester; still only a number of said were easily measurable. The first and most concrete is the number of times that Vivian has updated the website on her own. Of the six tabs currently on the website, Vivian has successfully updated each and every one. As it's only been a few weeks since the beginning of the task, tabs like "Events" have needed only one update. However, Vivian enjoys making periodic small revisions to other sections. Furthermore, she has found two websites whose format she likes, and practiced editing those locally to gain a broader familiarity with KompoZer. Also expected of this task was to improve Vivian's understanding of web hosting and authoring. While less concrete, this was measured by a simple conversation with her. By conversing with her I have determined that she now clearly understands the roles of server, webhost, and webauthor to the degree where she will be able to be more involved when working with the new website.

Noticeable Changes

This task brought about many changes to Nego Gato Inc, both externally on the website and internally through better use of technology. Contrasting the state Nego Gato's website was in prior to this task really highlights the changes that were made. Previously, the website was many months out of date concerning events, and many other sections needed formatting or content changed. Not only was Nego Gato unable to make changes to the website, but important information about webhosts and passwords was lost. Having retrieved those, and given some basic training to Vivian, they are now on the road to a better maintained website. This will be clearly seen with the current Events page and the better-formatted Programs page.

Outcomes Still to be Accomplished

One problem that will have to be faced after the completion of the consulting partnership is: What happens in the case of a new website or webhost? Given recent reports from board members this does seem to be a very likely circumstance, likely within the next month or two. The way that we are practicing is very general, i.e. not always on Nego Gato's current website. Many times Vivian will find a website whose format she likes, and save it to her computer. She'll then open it in KompoZer and just try editing text, or even playing around with its formatting. Also, were this to happen, the hope is that the increased understanding that Vivian has gained will not only help her with the new website, but also propel her to ask better questions. If for example, a new webhost is contracted, then knowing to ask how to login is still a big step forward.

Increased Capacity

Accomplish the mission of Nego Gato is contingent on their ability to reach out to the community through education and performance. The website accomplishes education, but beyond that it is only a tool to meet these goals. Through this medium, Nego Gato is hoping to increase both scheduling and attendance of their performances and workshops. Given that having an up to date schedule should help attendance, it also seems a safe assumption that a professional-looking website will also inspire confidence in future clients. Since this website has yet to be presented to the board, and thus is not launched, its effectiveness cannot be measured.

Sustainability

Perhaps one of the biggest concerns with this task is its sustainability. Training only one employee does raise questions of what would happen if they leave. Unfortunately this is an unavoidable problem of Nego Gato, as currently only Vivian is working at the Pittsburgh office. Still storing the website information (host, passwords, usernames) does move the organization forward in a more lasting way.

New Vision

While considerably more abstract, and thus much harder to measure, giving a new vision of how technology can help their goals is still incredibly important. Only time will tell if this website will be able to instill that sense of accomplishment in Nego Gato. Most likely they will see increased attendance at their shows, and someone will know to attribute that to their website. More immediately is the confidence that Vivian has gained from this task. This is perhaps more important and equally as astounding as she has taken so well to it. Now that she can make changes, she's constantly toying with designs she likes, and outlining changes. While before I know she had these ideas, it's only after this task that she's been able to make use of them. While right now Vivian is only updating current tabs, I whole-heartedly believe that this task has inspired her in a way that will lead to many significant changes to the website.

Related Recommendation: Online Shared Documents

Importance

There are a number of ways that the current website can be updated, but with the likely move to a new all-inclusive webhost, recommending specific changes isn't too helpful. However, there is a general function of websites which will provide immediate benefits to Nego Gato Inc. This plan, which was actually suggested first by Vivian, is to have an employee's only section to the webpage. Vivian has explained to me that the costs of sending documents by FedEx would easily be avoided if documents could easily be placed in a centralized location online. This money saved in overhead costs could then be put to better uses associated with the mission statement. With this as a goal, the implementation would not have to have anything fancy; the folder tree provided would suffice.

Implementation

To implement such a system without a technical person on staff would be very difficult. What is important is that Vivian now how to explain what she wants to someone who can implement this for Nego Gato. It's important that who implements it understands that this needs to be easy to use; ftp uploads should be avoided if possible. Also the way it's done now is not

acceptable, where the folder is public and anyone who knows the URL or searches Google can access financial data. All that would be needed is a password-protected folder that has an easy but secure way to both upload to and download from.

Resources

The best resource is going to be Nego Gato's new web designer and host, WebPye. Explaining specifications to them is the path most likely to be traveled. Vivian will of course have to take the lead on this, and her technical vocabulary will be her biggest resource. If WebPye is unable to do this, then asking any new technical hires about this kind of experience is important. Still it's likely that most of these interviewees will at least be able to password protect the current folder.

Task 2: Technical Organization

This task is a really just a collection of small tasks to help Nego Gato have an effective, current working environment. There are many smaller tasks with an overall goal of how best to manage technology in an unobtrusive way, but still prevent loss of data and functionality. The smaller tasks were to unlock and better organize the Macintosh and other systems out of service, better organize important software and its serials, and to give Vivian the skills she needs to administer the office technology.

Outcomes

What this tasks lacks in focus, it makes up for in measurability. Each of the small tasks provides very concrete and immediate evidence to show their effectiveness. Outcomes from that task include a password management system, and the start of a backup system. The password system is now home to over ten passwords from a variety of different machines, e.g. the router, the server, the Mac, Vivian's PC. At the beginning of this task one of the office computers, a Macintosh, was locked and the passwords were lost. Three weeks after we started work on it, the Mac was usable and more importantly all the data was saved. This definitely helped Nego Gato to meet their mission statement as many crucial files were recovered and the functionality to create more was restored. Further evidence is that a Philadelphia based group asked Nego Gato for a video segment, something that can be and has been authored on the Mac. As a follow up to incident with the Macintosh, a related task was started to help prevent recurrences of this issue.

Noticeable Changes

There are many changes at Nego Gato Inc. that have stemmed from this task, some obvious and some not. The obvious changes are big events, like gaining access to the Mac or the Server for the first time. Now that Nego Gato has access to the Macintosh, they can use the files on it. These files were very important, mostly related to advertising through media. Almost all of these files were not backed up, and hence could not be recovered in any other way. The server was a similarly momentous change, allowing Vivian the opportunity to shape the website as she saw fit. However, equally important are the less obvious changes. These are as simple as Vivian's increased understanding of technology. A concrete example of this is that she now uses our password management system for new login information. This small change can make a big difference in the future if any piece of technology gets locked again.

Outcomes Still to be Accomplished

One outcome that I was not able to personally witness was the implementation of a backup system. I've made clear to Vivian that backing data up is very important, and given the recent events on the Mac I feel confident that she agrees with me. Initially the board was unconvinced that local backup was necessary, leaning towards cheaper systems online. I then provided Vivian with the technical knowledge necessary to convince the board that with the amount of data Nego Gato has, online backup is completely impractical. Along with this knowledge I gave supporting recommendations, cost analysis, and metaphors. Due to these factors I am optimistic that a backup system will be instated sometime after my departure from Nego Gato.

Increased Capacity

While benefits are obvious within the office, this task still needs to help Nego Gato better reach their mission statement. Now that the Mac is usable, they can promote themselves using movies that were saved to the hard drive, or new ones they can now create. Through promotion they can have increased attendance to their performances and for their classes, which would certainly qualify as better meeting the goals of the organization. The same can be applied to almost any password in the system. Time spent trying to gain access to any device, server, router or computer, is time that could've been spent on working towards Nego Gato's goals. More specifically, this task is less about increasing capacity, and more about making sure it isn't decreased due to technical issues.

Sustainability

A real goal of this task is to prevent future problems caused by technology. Problems like forgotten passwords, data loss, and stolen information are best solved through prevention, and this prevention needs sustainability. Unlocking the Mac is only so useful as something I did one time, it's more important to make sure that the downtime it caused does not happen again. However, unlocking computers using command-line interfaced crackers that I compiled myself is not a skill I think Vivian needs. A better solution is to avoid losing the passwords in the first place, which can be accomplished through the password management system. This also applies to other technical problems. In the case of data loss, many times there isn't a solution after it happens, prevention through backup is the only way to avoid a problem. Still the most crucial aspect of sustainability is that the systems preventing failure don't fail themselves. This was why we decided to not have the password management system on a computer, but rather locked away in a drawer. As for the backup system, if it breaks we already have the steps to set up a new one written down, and by then Vivian has already practiced setting it up once. Also important to sustainability is that it be low maintenance. If either the backup or password systems are bulky and hard to use, then most likely they won't be I can only speak to the case of the former, but I believe that it is simple and robust enough that its use will be continued even after I leave.

II. Additional Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Skype

Inspiration

This recommendation is another example of when Vivian has a great idea, but doesn't know the technical details which are required to move forward with it. Right now board meetings are fairly infrequent and very expensive due to the board being spread out across the country. To eliminate travel costs Vivian suggested these board meetings be through some sort of conference call, and I recommended Skype.

Importance

The benefits of this implementation are two-fold. The first is that with easier access to board meetings, it's likely that they will occur more frequently. Currently to have a board meeting, at least one person will need to take a plane, and possibly some stay in a hotel. With this method the only requirement would be a few hours and a laptop equipped with Skype. Secondly, the cost benefits of this method would be enormous. On top of the fact that plane tickets and hotels will no longer have to be paid for, conference calls on Skype are free. Hence this would benefit Nego Gato both in productivity, but also financially.

Implementation

Implementation of this may be a bit more difficult than expected. Vivian expects about seven people in board meetings, and making sure all 7 of those can set up and use Skype will be at best time consuming. To go about doing this, I would recommend first sending an email to everyone who will participate in the board meetings, explaining to them that we're going to try to use Skype for board meetings. At least a few of the board members, including Vivian, already have Skype, but for those that don't we will need to help them set it up. Skype's website has a tutorial, which I watched Vivian successfully follow on the Mac. Still I think traditional phone calls to help with set up should also be used.

Resources

The first resource is Skype's own website: www.skype.com. On their website they have a tutorial to help people install and use their software. What's especially good about this is that their tutorial is clearly designed for people with little to no experience with software. Still, it can be a challenge, so for a second resource I recommend peers. Not only are a few people within Nego Gato familiar with how to set up Skype, but family members can also help.

Recommendation 2: Videos Made by Students

Inspiration

It was when a Philadelphia television contacted us that I thought of this recommendation. Vivian asked me to make a movie to submit to be played as part of a special on non-profits. However, I had to decline based on time constraints and because I felt it would not be a sustainable addition. What I'm recommending is that maybe at the end of each residency, a video be made about the program by the students in the program.

Importance

There are a number of purposes to this project. The first is the current use for videos: advertisement. This would be especially good promotion for the residencies as it could tell stories from their perspective. The second purpose of this is to expose the dancers to technology. Most video editing software is complex, but it lacks a steep learning curve. The students could learn a valuable skill through making their own movie.

Implementation

Unfortunately, I think this task will require at least one person who's familiar with computers. Still, given the dancers diverse backgrounds, and the possibility of new hires, I'm hoping that this requirement won't be too hard to meet. Once you have that one person, they can teach the others how to do simple tasks, and let them sort through footage. I expect that most younger people will be able to catch on fairly quickly. Also now that interns are coming for the summer, it seems likely that one of them will be able to work with the current software.

Resources

The resources will depend on which video editing software Nego Gato decides to use. Currently they have those that come pre-installed on the Macintosh, and a few extras that they've purchased. Whoever they find to help the students learn will most likely choose their favorite software, and work from there. Luckily all the software Nego Gato has is mainstream, and tutorials can easily be found online. Also there are hundreds of guidebooks available if they chose to make the investment.

About the Consultant

Scott McCaffrey is a senior in Electrical and Computer Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. He will be taking an internship at Cisco Systems in San Jose, California before volunteering in the Galápagos Islands in the fall.