Community-to-Community (C2C) Proposal
Savannah Global Community Alliance
SGCA

By

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Introduction

There are a variety of C2C models within the US and abroad, but despite their different goals, structure, focus or mission statements, all share the same passion that transpires in what they have in common: the three "Es".

Exposure
Education
Engagement

This proposal focuses on the creation of a C2C model for Greater Savannah, and more specifically on the existing international communities.

It will become clear that the three "Es" are the key ingredients and the corner stone of what will ultimately become the strong foundation upon which an organizational structure to build, maintain, service and expand our international communities can be realized.

General Background

Now that we have established the corner stone of what will ultimately become the foundation of our structure and organization, it is imperative to elaborate on why these seemingly "mysterious" three "Es" are so crucial to the success of any C2C model, independent of the market it ultimately serves.

- Exposure

Without real-life exposure to existing international communities, it is impossible to comprehend or understand what drives them, what lives and breaths within them and therefore what they desire, need and want.

One could simply approach or watch any international community from the outside and still not understand the ethnic or cultural intricacies of said group because the vision is limited and distorted by external views, opinions, pre-conceptions or even

misconceptions, all of which result in either a limited or incorrect definition of the community at hand.

We typically refer to this as the "outside-in" view whereby observed or noticed needs, shortcomings or gaps, i.e. inside functionalities, are identified against predefined outside parameters that may lead to incorrect strategies and functionality of the C2C model in itself.

A second and healthier approach would be to streamline our parameters within and through the "inside-out" view whereby the ethnic and cultural intricacies define the parameters that ultimately become the cornerstone of planned and executed strategies.

The latter approach also hereby ensures that any and all functional strategies, both short-term and long-term, become flexible and are easily adjustable as such are driven by whichever change occurs on the inside.

In order to ensure that the "inside-out" approach becomes the fundamental approach, it is imperative that the C2C model incorporates exposure, as it's first and foremost requirement for future success.

We will elaborate further on how to achieve exposure later on in this proposal.

- Education

The term education should be viewed in its broadest definition of the word possible and refers to self-education of the international communities through exposure.

It also refers to cross-education among the multiple international communities whereby the educator becomes the student and vice versa, therefore making it a continuous and ongoing process without end or destiny.

In essence, the process becomes a form of exposed education through repetitive exposure and self-education that leads to cross-education of any and all international communities.

This process will obviously find its start within the C2C but will rapidly expand when the student becomes the educator, who in turn teaches the student to educate other international communities and so forth.

The basic foundation of the C2C will see to it that through education the international communities become the self-propelled engine to ensure an ongoing process of exposure through education that leads to increased exposure.

Again, we will address this second component in more detail and how to start the educational component of our foundation later on in this proposal.

- Engagement

Our final component, but certainly not the least, is engagement and more importantly how and why anyone would or could be engaged continuously in this fundamental aspect.

In our view, we can separate the term "engagement" in two main components:
-External or local engagement
-Internal or international engagement

Both components may seem contradictory at first and yet they are complimentary in nature when viewed with exposure and education.

The external or local engagement component refers to the local and non-international population of Savannah and can therefore be called "external" since our goal and mission is to build a foundation and platform for, with and by our existing international communities.

The internal or international engagement therefore by definition has to be internal since the component identifies participation from within the international communities.

The result of bringing both components into a singular platform to operate from automatically supports and enforces the presence of both exposure and education thereby stabilizing what will ultimately become a strong and integrated support system for the future organizational and operating structure of the C2C.

More details about how this third E-component and the previous two will be initiated, designed, built and structured will be provided later on in this proposal.

For the time being and at this juncture, we have provided a brief overview of what the theoretical design should be based upon and it is our hope that at this time the readers get the sense that our philosophical approach is intentional and accentuates our belief that through cultural exposure, education and engagement, one can build the foundation for an all-encompassing structure that not only supports the international character of Greater Savannah but accentuates and highlights to both our residents as well as visitors that we are indeed international from the inside out as well as from the outside in.

The Market Components

C2C structures and organizations provide a multitude of services to a variety of communities across the globe.

For our purpose, we have identified specific market segments in Savannah and surroundings that are currently under-serviced or serviced in such a fractured approach that the end result is a confusing, non-specific and ill-defined entity without a clear community base.

Our C2C model is geared towards the multitude of international communities, organizations and alliances, each of which is either formally structured or exists on and by its own merit without a specific organizational structure or adherence to.

The existence of our international communities can easily be traced back to the origins of Savannah as the first English Colony and the colonial capital of Georgia through English, Scottish, Irish and Jewish history.

Since then, we count a multitude of international, cultural and ethnic communities that have been established and have grown throughout the years as a result of demographic growth and diversity stimulated by our port and trade activity.

Our international communities are so integrated that it becomes difficult to recognize their existence except through a multitude of festivals, each of which is organized, maintained and primarily frequented by its own members.

Reaching out and integrating such events, but above all the variety of culture and ethnicity, is often overlooked or not pursued given that one may not be aware of the other in a direct or indirect way.

Such is a natural occurring event over time, as cultural and ethnic groups tend to attract and find each other through very informal channels.

But, what if there was a central point of entry, open to any and all residents, visitors and tourists that each and every cultural, ethnic and international community could call their home?

What if this home would be established and operated by the same international community members as it serves under a simple and yet integrated umbrella of "Savannah Global Community Alliance" or SGCA?

That is the market segment and component that SGCA wants to serve in a unified and integrated way to replace the current fractured approach.

That is where equality and strength can be built through the variety of differences that unite in one single similarity: internationally local and locally international.

The Structural Components

We envision SGCA as an organization to exist of six main components, each specifically dedicated to one activity but all geared towards the international aspect of the organization and its clients.

The main components:
- Sister Cities
- International Communities
- International and Cultural Festivities/Activities
- International Volunteers/Ambassadors
- Small Business Community
- Education

Sister Cities
The City of Savannah is currently working on establishing and/or maintaining Sister City relationships from a pure governmental perspective.

We believe SGCA can play a complimentary but crucial role in establishing and expanding such relationships from a community and primarily an international perspective by tapping into the existing cultural and ethnic residents to form a stronger alliance with our Sister Cities and to involve our communities for mutual relationship benefits that can integrate exposure and education towards community engagement.

In this capacity, SGCA can implement the proposed recommendations made by GSIA's Sister City Committee (see final report dated June 2013) and maintain the Sister City relationship, both from a governmental and a community perspective.

International Communities
We envision SGCA to contact all formal and informal international organizations, associations, alliances and groups to define and document the desirable course of action for permanent relationships.

Such established relationships will have a designated SGCA volunteer/coordinator to maintain the relationship on an ongoing basis and expand where needed.

The SGCA coordinator will serve as the "quarterback" of the relationship management team that will consist of available volunteer resources that are identified through a general resource database (see Communications Protocol-July 2013).

International Festivities/Activities
Savannah is rich in annual international festivals, activities and parades and yet each one is organized and promoted as a single and culturally specific event.

We view these separate events as an opportunity to showcase Savannah as an international community that celebrates all our cultural and ethnic festivals under one single and common denominator: International.

SGCA envisions establishing relationships with each of the current organizers and financers and uniting all under one single umbrella for the purpose of organization, planning, advertising, financing and volunteering.

SGCA will have a specific coordinator who will streamline the inter-community and inter-activity perspective to take advantage of overlapping and/or repetitive efforts that are done individually.

Volunteers/Ambassadors
This component will consist of two separate yet integrated responsibilities.
The first will be to recruit, solicit, parse and store volunteer questionnaire information and maintain the data in a general resource database consisting of volunteers with an international, cultural or ethnic background.
The resource database with its multifunctional search capability will be able to easily identify volunteers needed for any upcoming or specific activity or as the need may arise.

The second responsibility will be to develop and maintain a City of Savannah Ambassador program, consisting of selected and trained volunteers that at the City's request can operate as ambassadors in public. (A formal write-up was delivered to GSIA in May 2013 and can be used as a template for design and implementation).

Small Business Community
Small family and locally owned businesses that serve the local community as well as our visitors and tourists will benefit from having a designated SGCA coordinator to assist and help with any questions, concerns or protocol pertaining to international commerce or even business conduct.

We do not wish to replicate the Chamber of Commerce, to become a variant nor do we believe our efforts will become a duplicate thereof.

We believe that small business owners, be they local, ethnic or international, can benefit from SGCA's integrated global approach towards the community and can become a point of reference and support.

We envision working closely together with SBA as a reference point and/or specialist but we will act as a liaison with a community-oriented and integrated focus.

Education
Savannah's universities and colleges already have a large international student contingent with its own international student body that functions as a campus-community integrator.
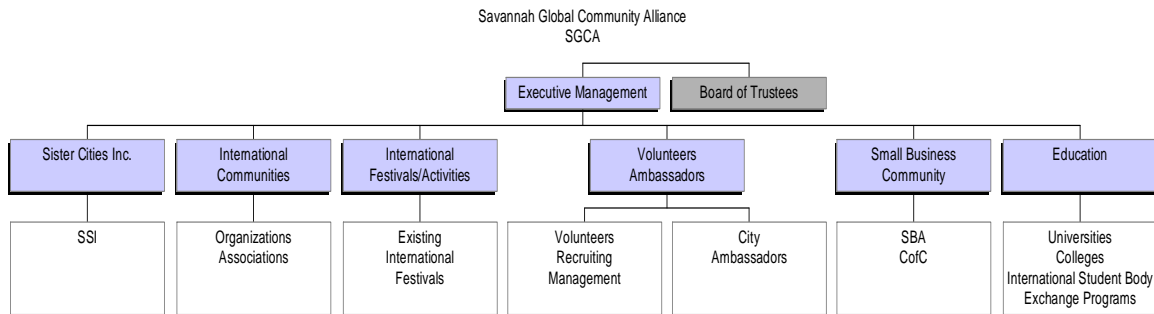
We envision complimenting this role with our community driven philosophy and exposing and introducing the international students to existing international groups, organizations and associations.

We also envision taking this opportunity to enlist said students as volunteers for our international festivals/activities as well as our future ambassadors.

SGCA coordinators will work closely with all educational institutions and will maintain strong relationships with both professionals and students to promote, encourage and enhance the relationships between international students and our existing international communities, both professional and personal.

The Organizational Components

When all of the above six structural components are placed within our organization, we can envision our structure to look as depicted below.

Savannah Global Community Alliance
SGCA

Executive Management	Board of Trustees

Sister Cities Inc.	International Communities	International Festivals/Activities	Volunteers Ambassadors		Small Business Community	Education
SSI	Organizations Associations	Existing International Festivals	Volunteers Recruiting Management	City Ambassadors	SBA CofC	Universities Colleges International Student Body Exchange Programs

SGCA will primarily operate with designed and well-identified (chosen and/or elected) volunteers, each of which will take responsibility for managing one or more structural components of SGCA.

The day-to-day management will be the sole responsibility of the Executive Management team, envisioned to consist of three appointed members: Executive Director, Treasurer and Secretary.

The Executive Management team will operate under the auspices of a Board of Trustees, which will have full fiduciary responsibilities as described in the Articles of Organization and its inherent Bylaws.

The number of Trustees, the appointment process and the duration of terms or consecutive terms will be determined at a later time.

We do recommend the use of a Board of Trustees with full fiduciary responsibilities over the more common Board of Directors model given the direct involvement of our Trustees from both a time and financial perspective.
This model ensures that all Trustees underwrite, support and promote the philosophy of SGCA, its implementation and adherence to, in all its daily responsibilities.

The Legal Structure

We envision that SGCA will operate under a non-profit or 501 (c) 3 status and will be considered a tax-exempt organization from a Federal, State, County and City perspective.

The Sister City component will be able to either use its SSI membership or SGCA's exempt status to operate as an individual component or a joint SGCA component.

All other structural components will operate according to the IRS guidelines as prescribed for US tax-exempt entities.

The Articles of Organization and the Corporation's Bylaws will specify the duties of the Board of Trustees and its fiduciary responsibility as it pertains to daily operations, funding, budget, fundraising, spending and tax reporting.

The Executive Management Team will operate under the strict guidelines as specified in the Articles of Organization and will report directly to the Board of Trustees.
The Executive Director will have one seat on the Board of Trustees but will not have voting power nor will he/she chair or co-chair the Board.

An external Advisory Board may be formed and who may act in an advisory capacity only to the Board of Trustees.

The Implementation Plan

The implementation plan will consist of two main phases to be completed consecutively:
- Framework or Foundation Phase
- Organizational Phase

Framework or Foundation Phase
This phase will provide the operational structure, protocol, processing methodology and technology needed, upon which the organization will function efficiently with a clear focus on relationship management, quality of service, low-budget cost and expansion.

Requirements
- Volunteer questionnaire
- External/internal communications protocol
- Resource database with flexible search parameters
- Inter-component communications protocol
- Processing methodology and protocol for each component
- EMT/BoT communications protocol (formal)
- Corporate communications (formal)
- Website/social media

Estimated completion timeframe
Yearend 2014

Required personnel
- Consultant/project manager: 1
- Technical interns/volunteers: 2
- Operational/procedural interns/volunteers: 2
- Web designer/graphic designer: 1

This phase will become the "front end" or the "foundation" of the organization, the structure and design template of which will be used for implementing and coordinating the organizational phase.

Organizational Phase
Once the blueprint (framework and foundation phase) is completed, we are in position to activate the real organizational structure
We envision that each component will be activated consecutively in conjunction with the selection of the Executive Management Team and the Board of Trustees.

Requirements
- Corporate registration/tax exempt application process
- Logo/corporate communications design
- Quarterback assignments for each component
- Executive Management Team selection
- Board of Trustees selection
- Advisory Board selection
- Promotion/advertising
- Volunteer requests
- International community reach-out
- International festival/activities reach-out
- Fundraising (internal/external)
- Selection of IT/financial/accounting/legal support team
- Component activation and roll-out

Estimated completion timeframe
Yearend 2015

Required personnel
- Consultant/project manager: 1
- Operational/procedural interns/volunteers: 2
- Marketing/communications strategist: 1

This phase will become the "back end" or the "house" of the organization and the structure that will be used to service our communities, clients, customers and visitors on an ongoing basis and with a clear vision of being locally international and internationally local.

Capital and Funding Requirements

We envision that any and all required personnel volunteer their time and dedication to this project free of charge.
The initial cost of the project will be based on development of technology, design, marketing and legal fees for corporate registration and tax exempt status filing and will be kept at an absolute minimum.

Our future IT, legal, financial and accounting partners will become an integral part of our project on an ongoing basis and will receive external and public recognition within the community in exchange for a reduction of standard applicable fees of at least 50% or more.

We estimate our funding requirement, minus the proposed fee reduction, to be no more than $5,000.00 and will encompass the following envisioned start-up charges:

Articles of Organization, bylaws and registration:	$400.00
Web design/web location/email/transactions:	$1,000.00
Communications supplies/logo:	$500.00
Marketing:	$500.00
Office infrastructure:	$1,000.00
Miscellaneous:	$1,000.00
Reserve:	$600.00
Total:	$5,000.00

Capital and Funding Sources

SGCA will strategically partner with service providers that will either become long-term financial partners or are willing to provide monthly services needed to operate the corporation.
Such would include phone service, web hosting, back-up data storage, postage, advertising, office supplies etc.

The members of our Board of Trustees, and their employer, will be expected to raise a minimum amount of funding each year, the level of which can and will vary and will be determined at a later date.

Revolving funding will be derived from services provided, i.e. Sister Cities, advertising, organization, volunteers, ambassadors, small business support/consulting and educational services.

The Motivation, the Need and the Why

The above should provide a sufficient basis for simply asking the questions:
- What is the motivation behind this proposal?
- Is there really a need for such an alliance in Savannah?
- Why are we proposing this structure?

All of these are very fair questions and we will try to answer them one at a time.

We are motivated because we are either international or have an extensive international, cultural and ethnic background, but we are all living and working in Savannah, which we call our home.
Over time, we have all found our own way to meet and stay in touch with people of identical or similar backgrounds, and along the way we have created our own "niche" market.
Sometimes this was and is done in a more formal or organized structure through existing international organizations, groups or associations, but mostly this is done informally and in a far less structured way.

We believe that creating a Global Community Alliance in Savannah will unite our existing international communities and will provide easy access for any new resident, student, visitor or tourist to make formal and informal connections.

SGCA as a structured alliance can fill in the void that currently exists in the international communities by simply calling the void our place to be, our niche and our home.

A place where we belong, we build and we thrive to the benefit of all residents.
A place where we can build similarities out of differences.
A place where we can build strength out of weakness and we can unite where the divide meets.

SGCA can become a home for international communities to learn about, teach and share their cultural heritage with other international communities and groups.

A home where international becomes local and local becomes international so that Savannah can showcase that our home is internationally local and locally international.

A Business-to-Business (B2B) or a Business-to-Community (B2C) model, as is clearly visible at this time, cannot fill this void or niche.
Our international business community is thriving from a commerce, import/export and expansion perspective, and yet our community-at-large is underserved and ignored by City, SEDA, CoC and large business partners.

SGCA will fill that gap with a sole and clear focus on communities for the benefit of all; culturally, ethnically and internationally.

Savannah Global Community Alliance
We build cultural bridges.

About the author:
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