

## Final Assessment: Strategic Communication Plan

### More Than Jewelry: Elevating Starfish Project's Brand

#### **Executive Introduction**

Starfish Project is a social enterprise that has provided a transformative path for survivors of human trafficking since 2006. Through the creation and global sale of handmade jewelry, it funds holistic care programs for women and empowers them with training in photography, accounting, graphic design, and marketing.

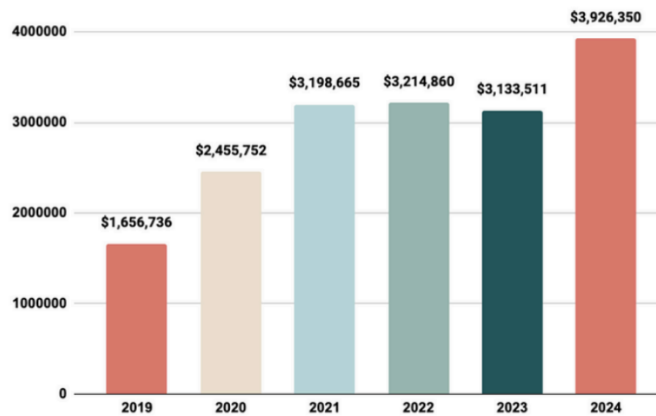
Despite doubling its income from \$1.6 million in 2019 to \$3.9 million in 2024, Starfish Project remains relatively unknown in the jewelry market (McGee, J. 2024). The core communication problem is that its storytelling—in both paid and owned media—does not capture attention quickly enough to compete with larger, more visible brands. They also do not utilize partnerships, which is critical for combatting human trafficking.

There are two main objectives. The primary objective is to increase online sales revenue. This would ideally happen over a four-month period by 20.15% from \$412,000 to \$495,000. The secondary objective is to strengthen audience engagement through emotionally resonant storytelling, targeted outreach to media gatekeepers, and a multi-platform digital strategy. Sales is the most important for any business, but it cannot achieve sales without awareness of the brand.

Millennial and Gen Z women ages 18–35 will be the primary audience, and Millennial and Gen X women ages 36-55 will be the secondary audience. The Situational Theory of Publics will be utilized in order to segment audiences based on awareness and engagement. Content will

combine survivor-centered narratives with high-quality visuals, social media storytelling, and targeted paid ads to inspire action.

## Total Income:



McGee, J. (2024).

### Communication Theory Application

This campaign applies the Situational Theory of Publics (STP), which segments audiences into nonpublics, latent publics, aware publics, and active publics based on their problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement (as described in Xifra, 2016, citing Grunig & Hunt, 1984). STP provides a framework for identifying which groups of potential customers are unaware of Starfish Project’s mission and how to move them toward engaging with the brand and purchasing decisions. “Determining your audience categories helps you understand how to communicate with them. This helps you avoid wasting the wrong communication strategies on the wrong audiences” (Palacios, 2014, para. 10). In other words,

attempting to persuade people who are already customers with an awareness campaign or trying to do a sales campaign on a cold audience would be a waste of resources.

The persuasion sequence will progress in three stages. It will go from awareness (broad social media ads and influencer content), to interest (storytelling posts, reels, and blog content), to action (direct calls-to-action with retargeting ads). This aligns with AIDA principles (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action), ensuring that each touchpoint builds on the last to guide audiences toward making a purchase or sharing the brand.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical communication is critical for a survivor-centered brand. This plan adheres to the ethical storytelling guidelines as described by *VAWnet*, a leading resource on violence against women, ensuring that all survivor narratives are informed, consensual, and protective of participants' dignity (Branco, 2024, para. 24). No stories will be fabricated, exaggerated, or stripped of survivor agency.

From a platform ethics perspective, the campaign will comply with advertising standards on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Google, avoiding manipulative urgency tactics and respecting user data privacy. While it may be possible to get more sales in the short term with the aforementioned tactics, in the long term, customers will respect how Starfish Project does not use guilt to manipulate them. Furthermore, AI tools may assist in content drafting and analytics but will not replace human oversight, especially when working with sensitive survivor stories. The messaging will avoid trauma exploitation, instead framing survivor stories around empowerment, growth, and success. All content will align with the brand's mission and be vetted to ensure it fosters dignity, not pity.

## Situation Analysis

Starfish Project is a social enterprise that provides employment, holistic care, and career training for survivors of human trafficking. Founded in 2006, the organization began as a small outreach effort and has since grown into a global jewelry brand with over \$3.9 million in annual revenue. This number is divided into jewelry sales, with \$2.4 million coming from jewelry sales, and the remaining \$1.5 million coming from donations and grants (McGee, 2024). Despite this growth, Starfish Project remains underrecognized in the competitive ethical jewelry market, with minimal brand awareness beyond its core base of supporters.

One of Starfish Project's major problems is that their brand's awareness is limited due to underutilization of targeted digital marketing and influencer partnerships. "Because of the complexity of human trafficking, the intersections between human trafficking and other community issues, and the multifaceted needs of survivors, researchers and practitioners agree that partnerships are critical to fully and effectively addressing human trafficking" (Rister, 2023, para. 5). Starfish Project's digital marketing is falling flat, and they are not utilizing partnerships, which is why their brand is barely recognizable, and their reach is limited.

At the same time, market research indicates a growing demand for ethical and purpose-driven brands, particularly among Gen Z and Millennial women who care about sustainability and social justice. However, the jewelry market is crowded, and competitors like Etsy sellers and Amazon shops dominate consumer attention because everyone knows about them. Furthermore, their YouTube ads fail to capture attention in the first five seconds—a critical threshold for engagement—while their blog is infrequent and strangely formatted. Instagram and TikTok also are major platforms for marketing, and Starfish Project is not currently using TikTok at all.

Without these crucial tools, they cannot inform potential customers about how much good their brand does.

These shortcomings will be addressed through emotionally resonant storytelling, improved digital presence, and strategic audience targeting that is based on the Situational Theory of Publics. By segmenting audiences according to level of awareness and involvement, Starfish Project can craft more effective messages and guide passive audiences toward action—ultimately increasing engagement, brand awareness, and sales.

### **Campaign Objective**

**SMART Goal 1:** Increase online sales revenue by 20.15% over four months—from \$412,000 to \$495,000—through emotionally driven video ads, influencer collaborations, and targeted Instagram/TikTok campaigns.

**SMART Goal 2:** Increase Instagram engagement by 150% (average likes per post from around 15 to 38) through consistent, high-quality visuals, storytelling captions, and interactive features.

**SMART Goal 3:** Produce at least three short-form social media ads (15–60 seconds each) tailored to Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, each with a strong hook, survivor focus, and clear call to action.

**SMART Goal 4:** Secure at least four earned media or influencer features via personalized pitches, preferably to *National Jeweler*, @ConsciousChatter, @SustainablyChic, and *Good Morning America*.

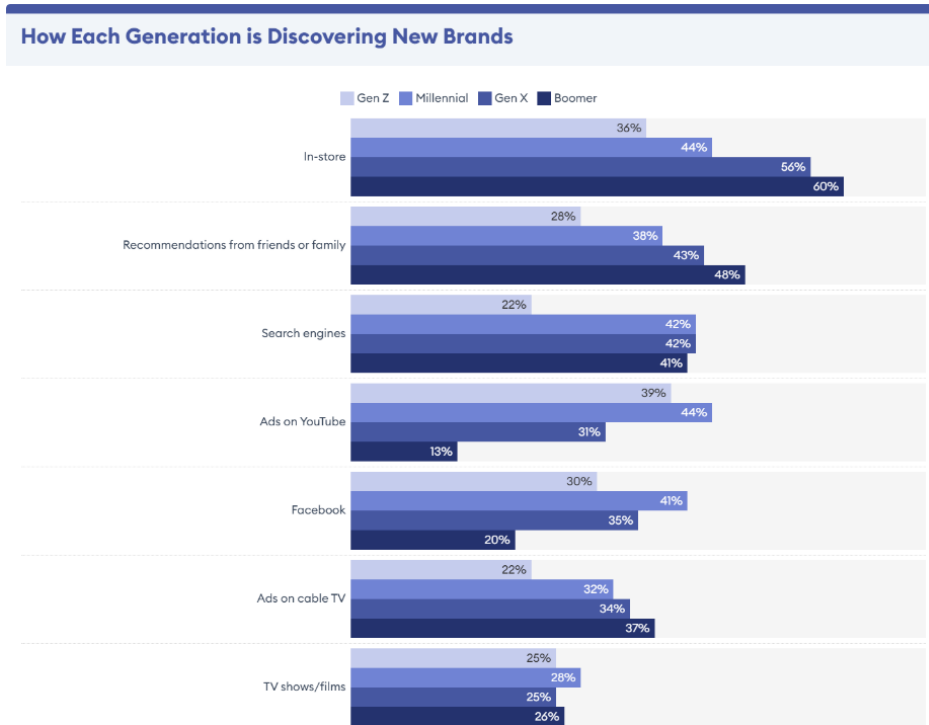
### **Target Audience**

**Primary Audience:** Millennial and Gen Z women ages 18–35 who value ethical shopping, social justice, and emotionally engaging brands. They are digitally savvy, active on Instagram and TikTok, and often discover brands through online ads and influencer content. Average annual income will be targeted at \$50,000+ because the price of the jewelry is between \$45-\$110.

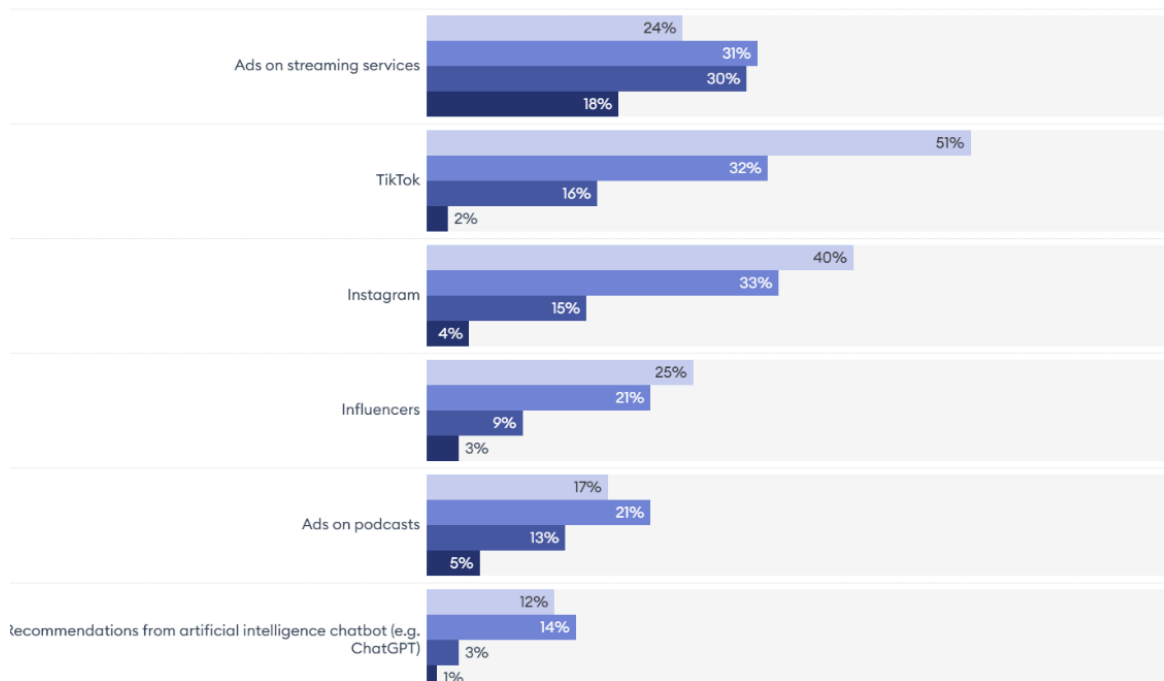
According to *Forbes*, all generations value quality jewelry as the top selling point that determines their loyalty to a brand (Haan, 2024, para. 5). This is perfect because Starfish Project's jewelry is made very well.

**Secondary Audience:** Women ages 36–55 who are socially conscious shoppers and may be active on Facebook and Instagram.

According to *Jeweler's Mutual*, jewelry buyers value quality craftsmanship, prior positive experiences, unique designs, reasonable pricing, and ethical brands. (Bailey, 2024). These are all areas where Starfish Project excels. Additionally, a *Forbes* survey of 2,000 consumers found that all generations, including 68% of Gen X and 40% of Gen Z, value a brand's reputation (Haan, 2024, para. 10). Lastly, Gen X, Gen Z, and Millennial audiences often discover new brands through social ads and care deeply about brand reputation, making Starfish Project's ethical mission a strong selling point (Haan, 2024). This piece of evidence also supports how they should be posting regularly on popular social media sites.



Haan, K. (2024).



Haan, K. (2024).

Moreover, research supports that sustainability-related marketing messages (SRMMs) alone do not significantly influence brand loyalty or word-of-mouth, which is vital to understand for this campaign (Machado & Goswami, 2024). This means that Starfish Project cannot only rely on its ethically-made jewelry as a selling point. Instead, messages are only effective when they trigger a sense of moral responsibility and personal norms (PN) through raising awareness and emotional resonance. (Machado & Goswami, 2024). By centering content on survivor narratives, this campaign will tap into emotional and moral drivers that can translate into stronger loyalty and word-of-mouth. The messaging needs to connect on a human level to be persuasive.

## **Persuasion Strategy**

### **Persuasion Sequence:**

1. **Attention** – Survivor-centered storytelling casts a wide net with emotional connection.
2. **Interest** – Paid ads and influencer collaborations introduce the brand again with a strong visual hook, advertising beautiful, handmade jewelry.
3. **Desire** – Showcasing the dual impact of purchases (beautiful jewelry + survivor empowerment).
4. **Action** – Clear calls to purchase, share, or follow.

### **Persuaders:**

- **Internal spokespeople:** Starfish Project founder, Jenny McGee, trained staff, and survivor-advocates.
- **External influencers:** Ethical fashion creators, jewelry influencers, and socially conscious lifestyle bloggers like @ConsciousChatter and @SustainablyChic

- **Media partners:** Outlets like *National Jeweler* and *Good Morning America*.

### **Platform and Media Strategy**

**Paid Social:** Instagram and TikTok for visual primary audiences and Facebook for Gen X and older Millennial secondary audiences because they frequent those platforms (Haan, 2024).

Google Discovery Ads for anyone who has expressed interest in handmade jewelry and how to help survivors of human trafficking.

**Owned Media:** Starfish Project blog, improved with regular SEO-driven storytelling posts; email newsletters highlighting new collections and impact stories.

**Earned Media:** Outreach to sustainability and jewelry-focused media, podcasts, and influencer pages. This would include *National Jeweler*, @ConsciousChatter, @SustainablyChic, and *Good Morning America*—with personalized pitches requesting a feature, interview, or spotlight during the campaign period.

### **Content Strategy:**

- Short-form videos with emotional hooks. Headline: “When you buy jewelry from Starfish Project, you are directly impacting survivors of human trafficking.” #MoreThanJewelry #StarfishProject
- Survivor stories in carousel posts and reels. Example: “My mother sold me to a brothel in the Philippines, but I’ve found employment and transformation at Starfish Project.” #MoreThanJewelry #StarfishProject
- High-quality Instagram pictures of Starfish Project’s jewelry with heartfelt captions. Description: “100% of sales go to support survivors of human trafficking. ‘My dreams

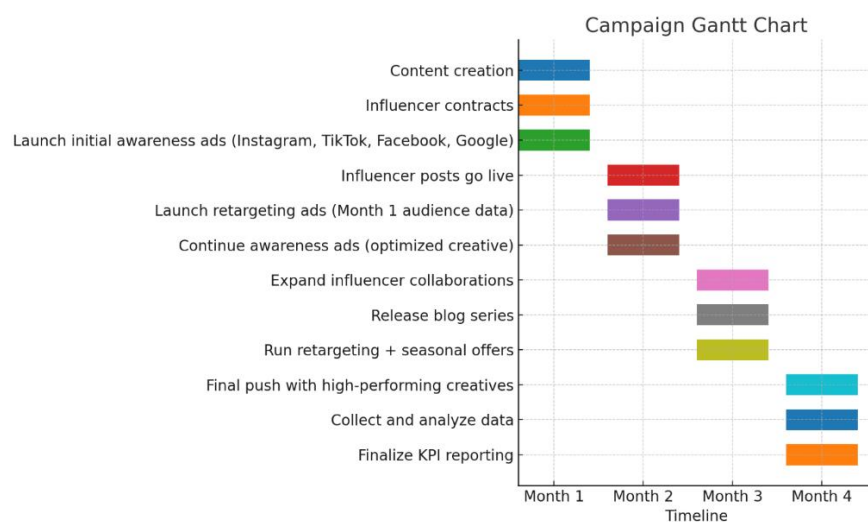
have come true. I am studying for the first time in my life.’—Mae, Production Team.”

#MoreThanJewelry #StarfishProject

- Blog posts expanding on survivor stories, product craftsmanship, and the mission’s impact. Example: “Each piece of jewelry is handmade and ethically made. 100% of sales goes to restoring hope to exploited women. Make a purchase today!”

## Timetable and Budget Estimate

### Timeline (4-month campaign):



### Estimated Budget Per Month:

- Content creation (photo/video): \$3,000
- Influencer collaborations: \$4,000
- Paid ads (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Google): \$5,000
- Blog SEO optimization & copywriting: \$1,000
- Media outreach tools & PR software: \$500

**Total Per Month: \$13,500**

## **Evaluation Strategy**

### **KPIs:**

- Online sales revenue (tracked via Shopify/Google Analytics).
- Instagram engagement rate (likes, comments, shares via Meta Business Suite).
- Number of earned media/influencer features.
- Branded search traffic and blog readership (Google Search Console).

### **Evaluation Process:**

Weekly platform analytics checks, monthly KPI tracking reports, and a final post-campaign evaluation to assess ROI and make recommendations for long-term adoption of successful tactics.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Starfish Project will be strategically positioned to strengthen its brand identity, expand reach, and increase sales by combining emotionally resonant storytelling with targeted digital marketing and media outreach. By applying STP to guide message sequencing and platform use, the campaign ensures tailored engagement that moves audiences from awareness to action.

The recommendations are that Starfish Project should continue producing survivor-centered content, build deeper influencer relationships, and maintain a consistent blog strategy to reinforce brand loyalty and sustain growth beyond the campaign period.

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