



NOVEMBER, 2010

WHO WE ARE

Vancouver Is Awesome Inc is a community based organization dedicated to spreading a positive message about the city of Vancouver, BC and the arts and culture within it. Founded, edited and maintained by folks who live here and who truly love this city of ours, the bulk of what we do occurs through our three-pronged online presence (web site, Twitter and Facebook) that delivers light-hearted fun daily. With a mantra of "no bad news" we only report on positive happenings and leave the "real" news to traditional media and other web sites. We've got ears to Vancouver's streets and are happy to serve as it's cheerleaders, perpetually delivering a celebratory message.

After building a healthy community resource and a following of tens of thousands of residents we incorporated as a not-for-profit in July of 2009 and have been operating for the past year almost exclusively on revenue generated from advertising. Though a vital part of the equation, this does not cover our annual costs and is not a realistic fundraising structure for us in the long term.

Our mandate is to foster a sense of civic pride within Vancouverites.

So far we have achieved this in part but we are in need of financial support to help us maintain - as our reach and impact has been steadily growing our resources have become strained almost to the point of buckling under the pressure.

READERSHIP AND GROWTH

We deliver to a keen, 18-40ish year old audience of men and women, 76% of who are residents of the Lower Mainland. 24% of our visitors reside in other Canadian cities and other countries. ALL are looking for awesome stuff concerning Vancouver. Our traffic has gone up 50% in the past six months and we now deliver 110,000 page views per month to an average of 30,000 unique visitors. Our site is search engine optimized and typically comes up on the first or second page of a Google search on Vancouver-specific topics. We have thousands of followers on Twitter and Facebook. A by-product of us talking to Vancouverites is that tourists are also keyed in to get the *real* goods on our city, from a local perspective.

PRESS AND HONOURS IN 2009/2010

- We received 2 Georgia Straight "BEST OF" awards in 2009 and 2010, have been featured in WE, 24 Hours, The Vancouver Sun and we were also featured in Discorder Magazine as one of the "top blogs in the city". Our founder has had multiple interviews on CBC Radio 1 and CBC Radio 3 talking about us, as well as being featured on SHAW TV's The Express, 107.9 FM Burnaby, 90.1 CJSF and Toronto's Newstalk 1010. He was also invited to sit on the panel of judges for the Celebration of Light Fireworks competition for 2010.
- in 2010 we were one of a few invited to become a member of the BC Association of Magazine Publishers as an e-magazine. We are now a member in good standing.

As a tiny organization our positive impact on the community over the past year has been almost immeasurable.

MUCH MORE THAN AN ONLINE RESOURCE

Aside from having published 4,800 features on our web site celebrating so many awesome aspects of our city, (we won't get into the many facets of our site here but encourage you to explore the beast on your own) as well as developing a large following on Twitter and Facebook, we also work in the *actual* community outside of the web. Here are just a few of the things we've done in the past year:

- We partnered with festivals and events as a media sponsor to deliver broad (and free) online exposure: DOXA Festival, Hockey Night In Canada's Play On!, The Greenest City's Pecha Kucha Night, Music Waste, VIFF, VIDF, Talent Time, CreativeMix, IDS West and more plus countless one-off events.
- During the Games we put together an art show called "An Awesome Showcase" which was intended to show off local artist's work to the world. It contained a collection of work from 30 different emerging and mid-career visual artists, housed inside Shine at the top of Water Street and open to the public every day of the Olympics. We also co-produced and curated two art shows for Walrus on Cambie Street in 2010.
- We've partnered on a weekly radio feature on The Peak 100.5 FM where we talk about all things awesome in Vancouver. This feature has run for more than 30 consecutive weeks.
- We occupy a table at the Blim Market on Main Street every month where we sell books by Vancouver authors and get the word out about our resource. We recently launched The Vancouver Book Club (we still can't believe the name wasn't already taken!) and will be holding seasonal meetings where readers will be able to meet with the authors of the books we suggest, to discuss them. The first book is *Vancouver Special* by Charles Demers.
- We've co-presented a sneaker drive (2 years running) where thousands of shoes were collected and distributed to the needy by the Portland Hotel Society. We also helped to promote Livestock's yearly Block Party and put together a soccer team that played in their LiveCup tournament in support of Right To Play.
- We are committed to a partnership with the Museum Of Vancouver to deliver programming in 2010, producing events to take place at the museum. Our first was Volume 1 of a live talk show called A Night at MOV with Conor Holler. It was months in the making with a Leo-nominated writing team and it was an overwhelming success.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT ATTACHED (WE DID SAY ALMOST IMMEASURABLE)

Below is a list of 54 of the Vancouver-based organizations and businesses that we have worked with in the past year whose support letters are in a PDF that we can provide upon request:

BC Association of Magazine Publishers, Blim, Books On The Radio, CBC Radio 3, Cause + Affect, Charles Demers, The Cheaper Show, Coco Cake Cupcakes, Jon Coleman/PHS, CreativeMix Conference, Dan Mangan, Artsy Dartsy, Disorder Magazine, DOXA Festival, Faceshots Agency, Vancouver Farmer's Markets, Fortune Sound Club, Granville Magazine, Graphic Designers of Canada, Harbour Publishing, Home For The Games, IDS West, Karran Finlay Marketing, Killbeat Music, LiveNation, Make It Festival, Mint Records, Miss604/Sixty4Media, Montecristo Magazine, Museum Of Vancouver, Music BC, Music Waste, Nardwuar, Native Footwear, The Peak 100.5 FM, Pins and Needs, Poetry Is Dead Magazine, Push Festival, Radar DDB, The Raincity Chronicles, Regional Assembly of Text, Rethink Communications, Salazar Film Productions, Shine Nightclub, Talent Time, Tourism Vancouver, Translink, The Vancouver Observer, The Vancouver Police Museum, Vancouver International Dance Festival, Walrus, Westbeach, Winnie Cooper Promotions, Zulu Records

A STRONG LEADER AND A 'FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY' MODEL

Vancouver Is Awesome was founded in 2008 by BC-born creative director and editor, Bob Kronbauer, who is cited by the Canadian Design Resource as "one of the top designers in his category". He founded the first online skateboarding magazine, PacificSkateboarding.com, in 1997, and as the project gained popularity was scooped up by Joe Firmage of USWeb who facilitated the acquisition of the magazine by the multimillion dollar boardsports portal startup, HardCloud.com, so that he could move to Southern California to work as the skateboard editor. After Hardcloud's demise (attributable mostly to the dot com crash), Bob worked as a contractor for several skateboard and streetwear companies before spending a three year tenure as an art director at Spike Jonze's Girl Skateboards in Los Angeles. He left California to move back to Vancouver in 2004 and worked for the next few years as a freelance creative director. He has completed projects for Kangol, Nike SB, Nike 6.0, Electronic Arts, Stussy, Livestock, Threadless, Poketo, Lakai Footwear, Emerica Footwear and Puma amongst others. A book of his photography has been published by Holy Water of London and he and his work have been featured in exhibits worldwide as well as in pop culture and design magazines such as Tokion, IdN, Print, Mass Appeal, Nickelodeon, Streetwear Today, XLR8R, Anthem and more.

As Vancouver Is Awesome has grown and his responsibilities to the organization have gone almost beyond his ability to manage them, Bob has not taken on any new work as a creative director in months - he is dedicated to us full time and has put this package together written in the third person (oh, hi!). He works not only as the managing editor of the web site but also as our creative director and executive director.

Though our organization has a strong leader with more than ten years experience in online publishing it is by no means a one man show. Over the past two and a half years our team of pro-bono editors and contributors has had it's trials and tribulations and we've finally come to a healthy balance - we have evolved into a tight knit team of 20 who work together to bring regular features to the blog every single day and to get the word out through our many social media accounts. We would be nothing if not for our skilled and dedicated team who support us in this way. We also work with an amazing team of curators, producers and organizers on our work outside of the blog. And last but certainly not least we have our keen board of directors who offer their support, advice and leadership. Amanda Gibbs (Museum of Vancouver), Jesse Oye (freelance writer and longtime V.I.A. editor), Steve Pratt (CBC) and Jason Donaldson (GISPA) round out our current board.

We've built a solid foundation but the structure built atop it needs to be maintained by the folks who benefit from it.

IN CONCLUSION

We'll leave you to read through the support letters to hear from others what kind of an impact we're having, but one thing we are confident in saying ourselves is WE NEED HELP! As a community-based not-for-profit we work with local businesses who support our web project with advertising dollars. We also require operating grants (which we are in the process of applying for) as well as generous donations from private companies and individuals.

If you work as a marketing planner or media buyer please contact us about advertising opportunities to get your brand in front of our audience.

If you are an individual, business or organization who has the means to help us out financially, please consider making a donation to our not-for-profit.

We really are going to need everybody's help in order to be able to keep delivering the awesomeness to Vancouver in the long term.

