OverFlo: Hurricane Florence Preparation, Recovery & Resilience:
Wilmington Downtown Incorporated
Leadership and Management Category

#OverFlo
Wilmington, NC
Hurricane Florence Menaced Wilmington for a Week....
Innovation: Storm Preparation

- Removed BID street banners
- Removed BID hanging flower baskets
- Obtained mobile phone numbers from 75+ business and property owners
- Reviewed local emergency management protocols and contact information
- Obtained FEMA information and application process
- Pre-wrote merchant outreach email to help expedite FEMA applications post storm
Replication: Leadership & Commitment

- Board suspends work program to focus on recovery (not organization):
  - Cancelled Commercial Property Showcase (economic recruitment tool)
  - Cancelled PARKing Day (one day placemaking event)
  - Cancelled Fall Economic Series (education event that raises $7,500)
- Staff opted against voluntary evacuation orders
- Staff and volunteers assessed damage during the storm
- Staff and volunteers focus on clean-up and recovery
Emergency Management feared catastrophic flood within a week of storm’s departure.

Using IDA Network, WDI finds 600+ sandbags in Greenville NC and secures donation.

Despite roads cut off from mainland, WDI orchestrates delivery of sandbags.

With forklift help from a local brewery, unloads and distributes all the sandbags within 24 hours - a full 2 days before the river’s expected crest.

Sandbags arrive from Greenville

Sandbags gone within 24 hours
Complexity & Execution: Flood Threat

- Only minor flooding occurred
- WDI unwilling to gamble and took complex action
The Worst of the Downtown Flooding

Set $9,000 goal and May 13, 2015 deadline

Kickstarter Policy – no money if you do not reach goal

Research: Goal often met at last second from unexpected donors

Images stoke fear of catastrophic damage - sales plummet for Downtown businesses
Multiple people approached WDI to host a benefit concert.

Formed new task force and lead a holistic approach with goals of:
- Raising money for area nonprofits
- Communicating Downtown was “open for business”

Planning session attracted 50+ people, more ideas:
- Graphic artist developed logo within 2 hours
- Local media outlets agree to provide free ad space
- 37 merchants develop specials with proceeds going back to fundraising drive

Campaign was created in 2 weeks; WDI developed web presence and executed a marketing plan. Four events co-hosted over next 30 days.
Simplicity & Complexity: Name & Image

- Name is mash up - get over Hurricane Florence
- Heart-shaped design illustrates “we care”
- Blue waves represent the ocean
- The yellow is a sun rising on a new day
- The star and red color pulls from the state flag
- Social media savvy
- Insert adjectives to tout Downtown economic drivers to further enhance messaging: Arts OverFlo, Music OverFlo, etc.
- Sold 300+tee-shirts, 50 hats and stickers
Outcome: Governor Visit Adeptly Repurposed to Meet Campaign Goals

click here to see news story
Outcome: Events Draw Attention, People and Money

- Webpage attracted 4,511 views
- Facebook page had 30,810 impressions and a reach of 18,635
- Executed weekly theme to highlight different economic drivers
- Over 1,000 attended free concert and raised $23,000+
- Sold out 1,100 seat venue in less than a day for recording artist Lukas Nelson (yes, Willie’s son) and made $38,200 in sales
More Outcomes

- Raised $128,000+ with funds going to:
  - Salvation Army
  - Food Bank
  - Nourish NC
  - Good Shephard Center
  - Cape Fearless Challenge
  - The Harrelson Center

- Announced on *Giving Tuesday*

- Attracted local and state-wide attention

- Engaged new group of leaders and donors

- Accomplished with a staff of only 2 members and board of 38 people