

Tactics and Podcasting Strategy for Defy Venture

By: Alexa Cash, Nianru Chen, Rongzhen Lyu, Beth Shirk and Michael Spencer

Strategy 1: Engage with Los Angeles-based journalists who cover business and/or employment

This strategy aligns with our objective to get one positive or neutral story published in at least one media outlet each month. This objective is part of efforts to position Defy Ventures favorably for corporate partnerships, engagement, and funding. In our research, before developing strategies and tactics, we found a lack of positive, current media coverage on Defy. In order to gain more media coverage, thus positioning Defy favorably for garnering potential partner/funder attention, Defy should develop positive, professional relationships with relevant journalists. We are specifically focussing on the Los Angeles area, as Southern California is one of Defy's primary regions, and LA has the most sports teams of any Southern California city. We are looking for journalists who cover business and/or employment, because these are topics with which we can draw ties to Defy Ventures and make our pitches relevant to the journalists.

Tactic 1: Send 1 press release to Ronald D. White and Margot Roosevelt each week.

[Ronald D. White](#) and [Margot Roosevelt](#) are reporters for the biggest publication in Los Angeles, the LA Times. According to the LA Times website White's work includes leadership profiles, innovations in manufacturing, retail and business trends. Roosevelt covers California economic, labor, and workplace issues. These are all topics that Defy's various endeavors could connect with. Another of our tactics involves maintaining a blog and we have also developed a podcast strategy, so the news release below is announcing the launch of that blog and podcast. This news release is just a sample and is not meant for actual publication. The quotes were curated and

Jeremy Hudson/JHud Plumbing are fictitious. To relate to the content that White and Roosevelt produce, we linked the blog and podcast to professional development and what Defy graduates are doing in the business world, while staying true to our original intent for that tactic, which was discussing social justice issues.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 12, 2021



Defy Ventures launches blog, podcast

LOS ANGELES -- National nonprofit Defy Ventures is revamping its blog and launching its new podcast today, which will focus on bringing the worlds of social justice and professional development together.

Defy Ventures will publish new blog and podcast installments weekly, examining social justice issues like racial, gender, and educational inequities as they relate to the professional world. The podcast will invite a new Defy graduate or employee each week to discuss their personal experiences.

Defy Ventures CEO Andrew Glazier said these new endeavors fit naturally with Defy's mission. Defy Ventures seeks to end recidivism by training formerly incarcerated individuals to become successful employees and entrepreneurs.

"While we do our best to equip our graduates with all the resources they'll need to be successful professional leaders, many of them still work to persevere through inequities and bring about positive change," Andrew Glazier, Defy Ventures CEO and President, said. "Our graduates have learned a lot from our programs and it's exciting to now be learning from them."

Glazier noted that there is still discrimination against formerly incarcerated people in hiring processes and this often intersects with racial and gender identities as many formerly incarcerated people are members of minority communities.

The first episode of Defy's podcast will feature Defy graduate Jeremy Hudson, who now owns his own plumbing company in Los Angeles, JHud Plumbing.

"Entering the professional world as a Black, formerly incarcerated man was scary to say the least and I faced many challenges, some of which were beyond my control," Hudson said. "I want to make the business world a better place for other Black business owners like me."

About Defy Ventures

Defy Ventures' mission is to give formerly incarcerated people their best shot at a second chance. Our vision is to cut the recidivism rate in half by leveraging entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunity and transform lives. Defy's programs work toward accomplishing our mission and vision by supporting Defy Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs) along the reentry journey both before and after release from prison.

Tactic 2: Follow and engage with Ronald D.White and Margot Roosevelt on Twitter

Both White and Roosevelt are active on Twitter and highlight their affiliation with the LA Times and respective reporting specializations. Roosevelt is more active on Twitter than White, so engagement with her might be more frequent. Twitter is a popular platform for journalists, which is why we chose to focus on this platform for engaging with journalists. By “engage with,” we are referring to liking, commenting on, and/or retweeting content they post. Engaging with personal content, like life events, would not be intuitive to what we are trying to accomplish, though. The content Defy engages with should relate to White’s/Roosevelt’s journalistic work, specifically work that relates to Defy’s realm of concern, such as stories about hiring practices or entrepreneurship.

Tactic 3: Connect and engage with Ronald D.White and Margot Roosevelt on LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a platform all about business and job-related content, which fits with the beats of these reporters. They are also both active on this platform. “Engagement” here refers to the same idea as on Twitter, with the exception of the term “retweeting,” which would be called “sharing” on LinkedIn.

Strategy 2: Create content that is optimized for keywords “racial equality” and “social justice”

Using the right keywords is vital to Defy Venture's search engine optimization (SEO). An analysis of the top-ranking keywords on Defy Ventures' website on MOZ shows that the

top-ranking keywords on Defy Venture's homepage are "defy ventures," "recidivism rate nonprofit chicago" and "prison defi." But they have a relatively low monthly search volume shown as 1,131, 27 and 27. By conducting keyword research on MOZ to analyze predictive metrics and identify high-impact recommendations, we decided to use the keywords "racial equality" and "social justice" on Defy's homepage and "our story" page to create a solid SEO strategy.

The first blog in our series would focus on employment and barriers to entry for formerly incarcerated individuals. Defy Ventures should establish themselves as a source of information on topics involving recidivism and post-release opportunities, therefore, the blogpost is geared towards people looking to make changes in their field already.

Tactic 1: Website Homepage

Defy Ventures provides re-employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals, initiatives that are critical to promoting social justice and advocating for racial equality. After research, we found that as of November 15, 2021, the monthly ranking for the keyword "racial discrimination" across the web in United States reached 8,061, while the search volume for "racial equality" reached 1,592. Therefore, we recommend replacing the keyword on the home page of the website with the higher search volume "racial equality."

The Defy ventures homepage is comprised of the following: a description of Defy's vision, the current status and problems of formerly incarcerated people, the solutions and benefits Defy provides for them, a brief description of the Defy graduate and EITs' stories, donation and volunteer hopping links and contact information. Among them, the content of Defy's solutions and benefits for formerly incarcerated people is closely related to the keyword "racial equality".

Therefore, the alternative text "racial equality" can be incorporated into the text through Defy Ventures' initiatives to promote racial equality by providing reemployment training regardless of gender, age, race. Hence, an example of optimization for the "the solution" content of this page would be: Defy's entrepreneurial program enables one of the largest forgotten communities in the United States to defy the odds. Helping these minorities advance racial equality no matter who they are. We equip them with new skills, connections, and beliefs to match their new goals and succeed in their new lives of economic independence.

Tactic 2: Blog relating to racial equality and social justice

3 Ways To Make Employment More Accessible

Finding employment can be hard, especially when you're perceived as being different or less than other applicants. Whether it's based on gender, race, or class, discrimination is harmful and it slowly degrades the culture of any environment where it presents itself.

In some ways, discrimination has become so commonplace at work that people stop finding issues with the practice, however, there are ways to be proactive about countering negative stereotypes in the workplace that involve racial equality and social justice initiatives.

First, you have to decide where to start. For example, the U.S is the world's leader in incarceration, they hold 25% of the world's global prison population with more than two million people currently being held in prison and jail. Every year, 600,000 people are released from the U.S prison system who are pursuing post-release job opportunities, however, there is usually a lack of opportunities and support for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Before they're ever able to work and show off their improvement, formerly incarcerated people usually have to overcome a series of obstacles that are in place to exclude them from a variety of work opportunities. If you find yourself wanting to evoke change in your workplace practices, here are three tips for making your workplace more accessible.

1. Ditch the Box

Stop having formerly incarcerated individuals disclose their prior convictions on job applications that are shared with the interviewers. Enable people to show up as themselves before they show up as the worst mistake they've ever made.

In a [Harvard Business Review article](#) written by LeRon L Barton, he explained that “These job hunters face an ominous “box” that asks candidates to disclose prior convictions on online applications. Hurdles like this are designed to identify and remove people who have been impacted by the criminal justice system from the applicant mix.”

He continued to explain that “For those who do make it past the box, there are often background checks, which are administered by 96% of companies in the U.S., usually during the hiring process. Evidence shows that having a criminal record reduces callback rates by 50%.”

Instead of having a checkbox determine someone's eligibility, allow them to interview and complete the hiring process before you determine whether they should be allowed to pursue a position.

2. Find The Right Support

Unfortunately, there is a lack of support for formerly incarcerated individuals in the U.S which usually leads people to re-offend. This is where programs like Defy Ventures come in because

they enable people to gain new skills ahead of their release so they find employment or start a business.

As a non-profit organization, Defy Ventures focuses on social justice reform that leads to better outcomes for people post-release. On their website, Defy explains that their program has overseen more than 5,200 prisoners through successful reentry in the workplace while cutting recidivism rates in half after one year for their graduates.

Considering [Harvard Politics](#) estimates that the national recidivism rate is decreased by 43% for people who engage in educational programs ahead of their release, it's extremely important that people are given the option to engage with groups like Defy Ventures who are working toward a more equitable workplace.

3. Meet In The Middle

Compromise is a surefire way to find excellent employees on the fly. When you look at a role's eligibility requirements, sometimes, only one or two things might hold a person back. That could be a lack of experience, education, or references. Additionally, some unspoken requirements like needing professional attire or a car can cause an undue burden on someone looking for work post-release.

Therefore, employers should be mindful about what they ask of their potential employees and they should consider what are soft and hard requirements.

Give someone the chance they deserve and allow them to show up as people instead of labels. When employers only see a lack of experience, the label felon or an employment history gap,

they're closing themselves to an entire community of people attempting to better themselves and their life.

Tactic 3: Website "Our Story" page

Defy venture's "our story" interface is a first-person view of a person who is assumed to have been incarcerated, a description of his or her current situation after release from prison, and his or her hopes for the future that resonate with the mission of Defy Venture. After identifying the differences in content and narrative perspective between the "home page" and "our story," we decided to arrange different keywords to align with this to make each page different from the others. As of November 15, 2021, the keyword "social justice" has a monthly ranking of 54,430 across the web in the United States. We, therefore, decided to embed "social justice" into the "our story" page.

Firstly, creating a clear and concise meta description of the story page is one of the essential steps. A short meta description of the "Our story" page could include the mission and vision of Defy Ventures. For SEO optimization, the most important thing is to add the relevant, higher ranking keywords "social justice" to this page. So it should be: to give people with criminal histories best shots at a second chance; to promote social justice; we cut recidivism in half by leveraging entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunity and transform lives.

What's more, in SEO rankings, image filenames and alternative text are taken into account.

Therefore, in order to increase the accessibility of the "Our story" page, it is important to make sure that the image file name and alternative text are relevant to the content while changing the image tag to a profile with "social justice." This is one of the essential methods for search optimization.

Strategy 3: Promote audience participation through Facebook content

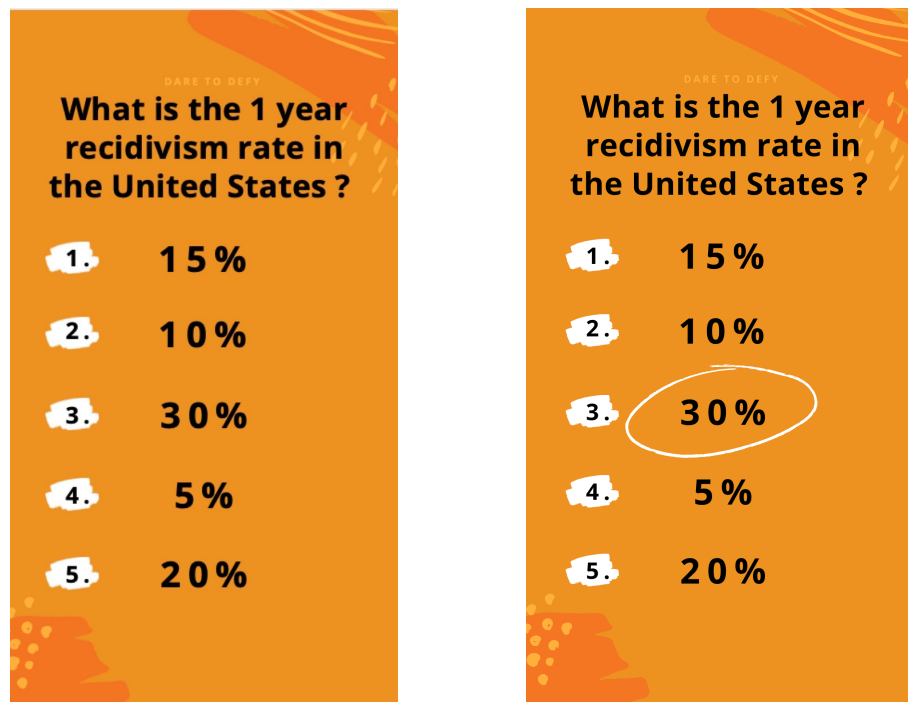
In order for Defy Ventures to look favorably for corporate appeal, potential funding and engagement partnerships, it must show value through social media participation and highlighting the stories behind Defy. Defy has an amazing mission and has already positively impacted many lives, so now it simply must show its followers and potential partners and investors all its work. Also, Defy has an amazing opportunity to add more value to its name by using its platform to have conversations regarding social justice on its social media channels. By adding value through having important conversations and showcasing the people behind Defy, the value of the non-profit organization will increase and so will its partnerships.

Each tactic our team has presented under the third strategy ties into one another to create a mosaic of execution.

Tactic 1: Polls

Our first tactic centers around polls, specifically featured on Facebook, regarding Defy Ventures, recidivism, the incarceration system in the United States and social justice. The use of polls allows followers of Defy to engage with the statistics and information behind Defy's mission. Defy is given the ability to educate its followers, while drawing their attention to information that could make them more passionate about Defy's work. In the example below, Facebook followers are given the opportunity to guess at what they believe the one year recidivism rate to be in the United States. Then on the next Facebook story, followers are able to see what the correct percentage is - ideally the story after that would have ways to lower this high percentage.

Additionally, some ideas for other Facebook polls could include the number of incarcerated individuals in the United States, the various locations Defy has in the United States and how many lives Defy has impacted through the number of graduates. It is important Defy uses these polls to give followers more insight on its missions, its stories and the topics directly related to both.



Tactic 2: Livestream Q&A with Defy graduate or participant

Our second tactic seeks to display the impact of the work Defy does through having a conversation with Defy graduates and Defy's President and CEO, Andrew Glazier. The two Defy graduates featured in our example are Ed Kressy and Susan. Ed Kressy is an author whose work

has appeared in “The Washington Post,” spoken for audiences at Google and LinkedIn and had his memoir “My Addiction & Recovery” published in April 2020. Susan is well accomplished in her own right, as she is the founder and CEO of All Boards Plumbing and spoke at a UN Conference event regarding the connection between economic empowerment and formerly incarcerated women.

The conversation will be held via Facebook live stream in a question and answer forum. In our example the event will be the first of many live streams and premiering on Friday, Jan. 28 at 3 p.m. PST. These Defy graduates will not only discuss how Defy has impacted their lives, but also larger topics like racial equality and social justice. This event will be an amazing opportunity to bring all aspects of Defy together, while also allowing followers to associate Andrew Glazier as the face of Defy. In the future, Defy followers could also send in questions to be answered during these Facebook live streams - a great way to get followers involved and engaged.

 **Defy Ventures**
Sponsored

Defy Ventures is excited to launch its first Facebook Livestream with President & CEO Andrew Glazier and Defy graduates, Susan and Ed Kressy!

 PRESENTS



Andrew Glazier
President & CEO



Susan
Founder & CEO of
All Boards Plumbing



Ed Kressy
Author

NEW

Q&A WITH DEFY GRADUATES

A Live Stream on Facebook

DEFY VENTURES

Q&A with Defy Graduates
Join us on Friday, January 28 at 3 p.m. PST!

Learn More

Like Comment Share

Tactic 3: Infographics with cross promotion on Instagram

Our third tactic involves our second tactic by providing an infographic to highlight the important “must knows” of the Facebook Q&A live stream with Defy’s President and CEO and Defy graduates. This infographic will be an easy to share item that members of Defy and followers of Defy will be able to share to their own social media accounts to promote the event. The example seen below, will ideally be shown on both Facebook and Instagram at least five days before the event.

This tactic will also involve our first tactic by giving Defy followers information regarding social issues in an easy to digest bite sized infographic. This infographic will feature the information about recidivism rates in the United States from the poll featured in the first tactic. Also, this infographic will have the definition of recidivism and be an easy graphic for followers to share on their own stories. It is important to make the infographics easy to understand and aesthetically pleasing, so followers will want to share this information. Defy followers will be able to access this infographic after the poll has been posted.


Defy Ventures
 Sponsored

Learn more about Defy Ventures upcoming event below!

WHO?

DEFY CEO and Graduates

WHAT?

A Facebook Live Stream Q&A

WHEN?

Friday, January 28 at 3 p.m. PST

DEFY VENTURES
Q&A with Defy Graduates
 Join us on Friday, January 28 at 3 p.m. PST

Learn More

Like
 Comment
 Share


defy_ventures
 Sponsored

WHO?

DEFY CEO and Graduates

WHAT?

A Facebook Live Stream Q&A

WHEN?

Friday, January 28 at 3 p.m. PST

[Learn More](#)






Be sure to head over to our Facebook to catch our first Live Stream Q&A!


Defy Ventures
 Sponsored

Defy Ventures is dedicated to reducing the recidivism rate in the United States. Learn more about recidivism below!

RECIDIVISM

is used to refer to the percentage of former prisoners who are rearrested for a similar offense.

One year recidivism rate

30%

in the U.S.

<10%

in Defy

DEFY VISION
 To cut recidivism in half by leveraging entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunities + transform lives.

[Read Story](#) >

DEFY VENTURES
Recidivism in the United States

Learn More

Like
 Comment
 Share


defy_ventures
 Sponsored

RECIDIVISM

is used to refer to the percentage of former prisoners who are rearrested for a similar offense.

One year recidivism rate

30%

in the U.S.

<10%

in Defy

DEFY VISION
 To cut recidivism in half by leveraging entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunities + transform lives.

[Read Story](#) >

[Learn More](#)






Check out the recidivism rate in the United States versus Defy graduates!

Podcast Strategy

Target Audience:

The podcast's target audience will be individuals belonging to potential corporate and funding partnerships. These individuals will already have an interest, even just a small one, in social justice and thus will listen to the podcast to go below the surface.

Theme: Dare to Defy

Our podcast will be centered around Defy engaging audiences through inviting Defy affiliates, such as graduates, team members and donors, to discuss how current social issues relate to their professional lives. This podcast will serve as a platform for conversations regarding the intersection between social and professional responsibility in the 21st century. The podcast will be entitled "Dare to DEFY" as it is seeking to educate its audience about how social justice and the professional realm are connected - dare to defy by educating yourself and speaking up.

Plan for the first three episodes:

The first episode will feature Defy graduate Jeremy Hudson who is now the founder and owner of JHud Plumbing in Los Angeles, California. Hudson will speak about the social issue Defy knows most about, mass incarceration and recidivism, and how these issues have impacted his own life. He will then discuss his time being incarcerated and how his involvement in Defy's program got him to the professional success he has experienced today. Hudson will highlight the challenges of being a formerly incarcerated Black man in the professional world. The podcast

listeners will not only get to know his story, but get to know the greater issue of mass incarceration and recidivism and how this is effecting real lives.

The second episode will be with Christine Castillo, the senior director of national programs at Defy. Castillo has an impressive repertoire of experience as seen through her work with Equitas Academy Charter Schools, City Year Los Angeles and her certification in diversity, equity and inclusion at Cornell University. Castillo will discuss how her experiences have led her to Defy and why she chose to work for Defy. She will then talk about her experiences as a woman in the professional world and the importance of a positive workplace environment. The podcast listeners will be able to see Defy through its team members like Castillo while also better understanding diversity, equity and inclusion.

The third episode will feature Darlene Luca, Defy's career & reentry programs manager. She is a life coach at the Anti Recidivism Coalition; Transition Coach with InsideOUT Writers; creative writing class teacher at youth correctional facility. She has lots of experience in teaching young people and building long lasting relationships. Does she have some unique tricks to get trust? How does she get her students to fall in love with the class? Who is the most memorable student she has met in Defy? What drew her to Defy and why has she stayed? Does she feel formerly incarcerated people are treated differently and if so, how? What has she learned from teaching and engaging with formerly incarcerated people? Why does she believe the power of hope, healing and forgiveness could achieve redemption? These are all questions Darlene will be answering and elaborating on in her podcast episode. The podcast listeners will get an authentic and raw look at the employees behind Defy.