



GLOBAL ALLIANCE OF SPEECH-TO-TEXT CAPTIONING

BUSINESS PLAN

Business Plan For: Global Alliance of Speech-To-Text Captioning

Organization Name: Global Alliance of Speech-To-Text Captioning

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Executive Summary

The Mission of the Global Alliance of Speech-to-Text Captioning is: To be the leading professional authority on speech-to-text captioning, representing all captioners, consumers and industry.

Our Vision is simple: Universal accessibility to the spoken word via all forms of captioning.

Membership in the Global Alliance is open to all captioners, regardless of how they produce captions; all consumers, regardless of how they use captions; all advocates and educators; and all industry, regardless of location or size. We will represent all factions of captioning through the diversity of our Board of Directors, whose members shall be elected from the general membership. Our members are the experts, and they will be key in helping us achieve our mission.

The Global Alliance was created by Karyn Menck and Steve Clark, both from the USA. Shortly after creation, Jennifer Schuck (USA) also joined. Karyn, Steve, and Jen are all stenographic realtime captioners, and they serve as members of the Board of Directors. Additional Board members are Caryn Broom (USA), a voice writer captioner; Will Lewis (USA) an industry representative, from Microsoft; and Gael Hannan (Canada) a hard-of-hearing caption consumer. On August 6, 2019, the Global Alliance officially launched. Our Founding Members Campaign will run through October 31, 2019, and General Membership will open on November 1, 2019.

Legal Structure

The Global Alliance is a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit incorporated on March 21, 2019, in the state of Delaware, USA. Having the not-for-profit structure allows for all funds raised to be used to achieve the mission of the Global Alliance. Donations made by individuals and corporations are tax-deductible, increasing fund-raising efforts. As the Advisory Board advises on future lobbying efforts, a 501(c)(6) designation is required.

Products, Programs and Services

The Global Alliance will create certifications and credentialing using real-world testing for all methods of captioning. Our certifications and credentialing will test all methods of captioning using the same testing metrics. All those who test will be held to the same standard of accuracy and percentage of text captured. All committees will be comprised of Global Alliance members. Volunteers will be appointed by the Board of Directors.

Our primary services will include:

- Representing our members and their interests by advocating for universal accessibility to the spoken word via all forms of captioning.
- Advocacy and education to bring awareness to what captioning is, how it is used and why it is vital in our daily lives.
- Monitoring legislation, existing and proposed, that affects access to captioning and quality standards for captioning. This will be achieved through contact with governmental representatives, agencies, committees, and organizations. It will include lobbying, attending, and participating in governmental hearings, meetings, and conferences, as well as serving on committees and commissions which directly influence universal access to the spoken word via all forms of captioning.
- Creation of universal captioning standards.
- Written guidelines to aid consumers in choosing the best method of captioning for any setting.

We will finance our activities through our Founding Members Campaign, which takes place during the first three months after launch, to build operational funds. Individuals and corporate sponsors are encouraged to join as Founding Members at various tiers of support. After the Founding Members Campaign has concluded, we will open General Membership, and those member dues will be the primary source of our financing. The Global Alliance welcomes additional individual or corporate donations at any time.

All financing, if any, will be used for general operational purposes, including salaries to be paid to a Chief Executive Officer, general counsel, lobbyist, and Global Alliance staff, if necessary. Board members and committee members are volunteers and do not receive compensation other than approved reimbursement of expenses incurred when traveling on behalf of the Global Alliance. Additional fund-raising will occur in conjunction with other not-for-profit organizations' events, which events allow the Global Alliance greater recognition by people with hearing loss.

The Global Alliance endeavors to raise the quality of captioning around the world. With professionals and consumers standing side by side making decisions and advocating together, we believe this goal is achievable. The Global Alliance supports its members by joining and collaborating with other not-for-profit organizations that promote and advance our vision of universal accessibility to the spoken word via all forms of captioning.

The Global Alliance is like no other not-for-profit in that its membership is comprised of consumers and captioners regardless of the method used to produce captions (stenographic, voice, automatic speech recognition, C-Print or TypeWell) or the type of captioning (realtime or postproduction). We welcome and encourage all caption consumers, advocates, educators, and anyone from industry, who in any way affects captioning or is affected by captioning, to become a member.

The Global Alliance has one type of membership. Members join as individuals. The annual dues of \$195 are the same for every member; all members have full voting rights and the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors or any committee.

The Global Alliance derives its strength from the diversity of its membership, the collective knowledge, wisdom and experience of captioners and caption consumers, and the institutional expertise of industry members.

The Global Alliance shall:

- Create real-world testing of all forms of captioning: stenographic, voice, and automatic speech recognition.

Goal: H1 2020

Resources: Testing and Certification Committee made up of Membership

Benefit: Allows for testing administration of members seeking credentialing

- Administer real-word testing to members seeking credentialing

Goal: H2 2020

Funding: Operational budget and registration fees

Benefit: Members can use credentials when marketing for services

- Create guidelines to aid consumers in choosing the most appropriate form of captioning for an event.

Goal: FY2020

Resources: Committee made up of Membership

Benefit: Educate the general public to the benefits and drawbacks of different forms of captioning

- Form Advisory Board to monitor legislation and rulemaking affecting captioning.
 - Goal: Close of Founding Members campaign
 - Resources: Founding Members
 - Benefit: Have an active presence advocating for users of captioning

- Offer engaging seminars, including an Annual Conference
 - Goal: FY2020
 - Funding: Operational budget and registration fees
 - Benefit: Offer professional development and member unity

- Offer insurance benefits, including health, life, disability, and equipment
 - Goal: FY2020
 - Resources: Strategic Partnerships
 - Benefit: Membership value

- Provide online networking communities
 - Goal: FY2019
 - Resources: Board of Directors/Staff
 - Benefit: Provide networking opportunities and collaboration between members and strategic partners

Board of Directors

As of July 2019, the Global Alliance Board of Directors is comprised of three realtime stenographic captioners, one realtime voice writer captioner, one representative of industry and developer of automatic speech recognition, and one hard-of-hearing consumer who advocates for people with hearing loss. Future board seats will be filled by the end of fiscal year 2019. Through collective knowledge and professional and life experience, these Board members recognize the need for an organization that brings together all those who create, use, advocate for or influence captioning.

Composition of Membership

The Global Alliance recognizes and applauds the advances made by voice writer captioners and is eager to offer testing and certification to them. This certification will

test and certify their ability to capture the spoken word and provide speech-to-text captioning at the same level of accuracy and percentage of content captured as any other method of speech-to-text captioning offered certification by the Global Alliance.

While automatic speech recognition (ASR) continues to improve, and while it is a suitable form of captioning in some settings, we recognize it is not yet appropriate in all settings. ASR will be tested at the same speeds and accuracy levels as stenographic and voice captioning, and will be held to the same quality standards to receive certification or credentialing from the Global Alliance.

The Testing and Certification Committee will be comprised of stenographic and voice captioners, ASR developers and users, consumers and advocates, and academia. Our real-world testing will realistically reflect the speed, tenor, and atmosphere encountered by speech-to-text captioners. Separate testing will be developed and refined to test broadcast captioning and text interpreting (a/k/a C-Print and TypeWell).

By creating a real-world certification, consumers and purchasers of captioning services can make informed decisions. There is a lack of understanding by the general public around the world about how captions are produced. “Global” in the name is intentional. Hearing loss has no boundaries. It can affect any age, gender, race, ethnicity, occupation, education or income level. Individuals with hearing loss are entitled to accessibility regardless of where they live in the world. Not all countries have the capability to create human-generated realtime captioning. Hence, automatic speech recognition software may be a good solution.

With guidelines in place that are global, using grassroots efforts, information can easily span the globe. This is how the Global Alliance will increase the quality of captioning. By increasing awareness of how captions are produced with different methods, it heightens the demand for captions, thus increasing the job opportunities for all captioners. Opposing advancement in technology will do the exact opposite.

Many tech giants have been working on automatic speech recognition algorithms for years. But there are no defined standards for captioning accuracy with these algorithms. Having these innovators as part of the membership will help find the solution to enhance the captioning output for consumers, no matter the method, which is the ultimate goal of the Global Alliance of Speech-to-Text Captioning.

Within one month of launch, the Global Alliance partnered with the Hearing Loss Association of America to form an Alliance for the Walk4Hearing in three cities: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Washington, DC; and Phoenix, Arizona. By forming an

Alliance, 50% of funds raised goes back to the National Hearing Loss Association of America, 40% of funds raised goes to the Global Alliance, and 10% to the local organizers of each walk.

The Global Alliance may partner with state agencies and commissions for the deaf and hard of hearing, by sharing information, reaching more consumers and gaining members. By offering pro bono captioning services by Global Alliance members, this encourages the awareness to the general public about accessibility and diversity and inclusion of everyone, no matter the setting.

There is no other not-for-profit organization that focuses solely on captioning and has no exclusions to membership.

Organizations that may provide competition and may affect members' decisions about joining the Global Alliance are the Hearing Loss Association of America, National Association of the Deaf, Intersteno, National Verbatim Reporters Association, and National Court Reporters Association.

Initial marketing will be done through simultaneous emails, press releases and social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) on August 6, 2019. Emails are to be sent to steno and voice captioners, industry representatives and not-for-profit organizations. Press releases are to be sent to print, television, and radio media. Social media posts will continue via the Global Alliance web designer, Leverage Communications, for the first ten days of the Founding Members Campaign, and these posts will be reposted by individual Board members to their personal social media pages. After this ten-day period, individual Board members will continue to post to the Global Alliance social media pages and their personal social media pages.

Founding Members are encouraged to repost and share Global Alliance social media posts.

Promotion and awareness of the Global Alliance will also come via our website and newsletter. Also, Global Alliance Board members will leverage their years of contacts and interactions with members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and disability advocacy community to raise awareness. Board of Directors members who are captioners will reach out to fellow captioners on behalf of the Global Alliance.

Additional groups to be targeted for marketing are students, audiologists, audio-visual engineers and machine translation organizations.

A Membership Committee will be formed from general membership. This committee will be tasked with increasing membership through additional or strengthened marketing and recruiting. This committee will also be tasked with finding additional individuals or groups to approach for membership.

The initial amount budgeted for marketing, which includes website development and social media development as well as creation of press release materials, is \$5,000. The Global Alliance will work with Leverage Communications to develop and maintain its website; create and maintain social media presence; and upload and send newsletters and updates to members and potential members.

The first year's total budget to create our website and social media pages, plus maintenance and improvements, is \$23,000.

Operational Plan

The Global Alliance operates as a virtual office. No buildings, structures or offices are owned or leased by the Global Alliance. All employees, Board member, and support staff will work remotely.

In March of 2019, the Global Alliance was incorporated in the State of Delaware. Directors and officers liability insurance is in place. No trademarks, patents or copyrights are held by the Global Alliance.

The Global Alliance operational structure consists of a Board of Directors, Advisory Board and various committees.

The Board of Directors shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer (a/k/a the Executive Team) and six Directors. The inaugural Executive Team and two Director positions will be nominated, voted on and approved by the Founders and inaugural Directors. After the first two years of operation, and at the end of the inaugural Chair's two-year term, an additional Board position of Immediate Past Chair shall be added, said position being filled by the inaugural Chair. Board positions shall be filled by members who reflect the diversity of the Global Alliance with no one method of captioning having a majority. All Board positions shall be filled from, and voted on by, general membership.

The Advisory Board shall be comprised of Founding Members and will meet virtually to create philanthropic activities to enhance the captioning profession, to advise on

lobbying and legislative opportunities and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding partnering and collaborative opportunities with other organizations — those whose interests align with our vision of universal accessibility to the spoken word via all forms of captioning.

Committees shall be created by the Board of Directors by the end of calendar year 2019. All committee appointments are Global Alliance members and will be made by the Board Chair.

Membership will be open to all individuals. Membership dues are \$195 annually, and every member has voting rights.

Impact Plan

The Global Alliance vision is: Universal accessibility to the spoken word via all forms of captioning. Working with caption providers, caption users and caption technology developers, we will advocate, lobby and educate legislative bodies, associations, civic groups, and individuals about the importance and value of captioning. Our members will become engaged and serve on legislative and civic bodies, committees and groups.

The mission of the Global Alliance is: To be the leading professional authority on speech-to-text captioning, representing all captioners, consumers and industry. Through the leadership of its founders and the diversity of its Board, the Global Alliance will create real-world testing that will become the gold standard for all realtime captioning. Consumer members will play a vital part in the creation of guidelines that will educate and assist event planners, disability services coordinators and other decision makers in choosing the form of captioning that best suits their events. Industry members are on the cutting edge of technology — whether captioning software, hardware or assistive listening devices — and they will lead the way in ensuring the Global Alliance has the most up-to-date information available for decision making and information dissemination to members and the general public.

Testing and certification: Immediately upon creation and assignment of members to committees, the first order of business for the Global Alliance will be to create real-world testing of all forms of captioning. Every method of captioning will be tested — stenographic, voice and automatic speech recognition — with the same content, at the same speeds and at the same required accuracy and content captioned.

The committee charged with developing testing and certification will be comprised of the most qualified and expert Global Alliance members — stenographic and voice captioners; industry representatives and academia; and consumers who count on

captioning in their daily lives.

Financial Plan

Cash Flow Statements

The Global Alliance, as a new venture, does not have past cash flow statements, balance sheets or income statements. Current statements are maintained by the Global Alliance Treasurer. All cash incoming to the Global Alliance and all money paid out on behalf of the Global Alliance are tracked by the Treasurer through QuickBooks.

Debts and Income

The Global Alliance, as a new venture, does not have any debts. See Revenue Stream below for sources of income and potential income.

Budget Projections, Year One, August 2019 - August 2020

Web design/maintenance and social media design/maintenance	\$ 24,000.00
Association management	\$ 18,000.00
Banking, accounting	\$ 1,200.00
Phone	\$ 600.00
Travel	\$ 2,000.00
Insurance	\$ 450.00
Miscellaneous (PO box, shipping, supplies)	\$ 2,000.00

Budget Projections, Year Two, August 2020 - August 2021

Web design/maintenance and social media design/maintenance	\$ 24,000.00
Association management, CEO	\$100,000.00
Lobbyist	\$ 50,000.00
Legal	\$ 25,000.00
Banking, accounting	\$ 1,200.00
Phone	\$ 600.00
Travel	\$ 2,000.00
Insurance	\$ 450.00
Miscellaneous (PO box, shipping, supplies)	\$ 2,000.00

Revenue Streams

Founding Members Campaign will run from launch until November 1, 2019. During this campaign, individual sponsors and corporate sponsors may contribute at various levels. Different benefits are available at each level. Potential donors include:

- Captioners
- Caption consumers

- Caption advocates
- Industry representatives
- Academia/educators

General Membership will be open immediately at the end of the Founding Members Campaign, on November 1, 2019. All members pay the same annual dues of \$195.00.

Government Grants and Foundation Grants will be researched and utilized to the fullest extent possible.