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Marketing Plan

Monroe County Airport

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Executive Summary

Monroe County Airport (MCA) underwent a rebranding strategy in 2020 with a vision to be the regional hub for aviation business activity, economic growth and a gateway to southern Indiana’s infrastructural future. They would achieve this vision by fulfilling their mission statement of providing an exceptional airport experience with a focus on people, service, general aviation, and collaborative partnerships that contribute to economic growth of the region.

MCA has shown success in clients with small planes and companies within the Monroe County area who utilize air transportation for business travel. Additionally, Indiana University is a heavy user of the airport for sporting teams who are traveling to competition at other schools. MCA has a desire to be recognized as a strong partner in the economic development efforts of the area and is looking to increase their awareness as a potential location for industry, corporate or business development. Interaction with community or regional economic development organizations has been limited prior to 2020 and dedicated marketing funds have not been a priority. Event experience and word of mouth have been their primary tools of marketing. The COVID pandemic severely limited any event activity in 2020 and MCA’s current marketing strategy has relied on the perseverance of their Executive Director to develop one-off marketing opportunities.

In the initial branding work conducted, multiple audience segments were identified in varying capacities as targets for MCA.

**Primary Audience**

● Regional Developers

● Regional Business Organizations

● Regional Commercial Realtors

**Secondary Audience**

● General Public

● Crane Naval Base

● Current Tenants

**Tertiary Audience**

● Corporate Aviation Customers

● Pilot Organizations

Strategies within this plan will address each of these audience segments using the USP and positioning statement identified in the branding strategy:

USP:

*Our facilities and location offer creative business opportunities for economic advancement.*

Positioning Statement:

*MCA provides a location where opportunity and business creativity are encouraged, supported, and given the tools to thrive while enriching the economic vitality of the region.*

In addition, a branding platform providing a single message essence – **More Than You Expect** was determined and a communication platform providing language and tone for the MCA’s core personality, character, approach to business, and why they matter will be the building blocks for any content and messaging development.

Establishing Marketing Goals, Objective, and Actions

In many marketing circles, goals and objectives are sometimes used interchangeably. To avoid confusion in this document, the following definitions are provided.

**Goals** are general statements about what the airport wants and expects to accomplish in the future.

**Objectives** are defined as realistic and measurable targets established to evaluate and track progress during the implementation of the marketing plan. Marketing objectives are typically short-term and achievable within the timeframe of the marketing plan.

**Actions** are specific activities that support achievement of an objective.

While the SWOT and PEEST analysis conducted during the branding strategy identified several goals without formally conducting a strategic goal session. It was the responses learned during the focus group portion of the branding exercise that gleamed some of the most critical action steps necessary to meet the goals initially interpreted through branding. Additional goal development may be necessary to round out the marketing effort and determine a fluid budget for funding the actions necessary to meet the goals.

**12 Really Important Things Content Marketing Must Address**

Limited resources and expanded audience groups make for a difficult combination for MCA. Answering a series of questions provided below, should assist MCA in refining target activity for the primary market group and allow for the expansion of the secondary and tertiary audience groups as resources become more available. Building solid, expandable content on the MCA website and within generic collateral materials will give MCA a base to begin their marketing efforts. Channeled social media can quicken the ability to expand into the secondary and tertiary audience groups while laying a foundation that can be customized easily for a meaningful Content Marketing Strategy.

First things first…

1. **Why are we doing this?**
2. **How will content marketing support our broader business goals?**

Answering these first two questions are the most important part of the process. Most business goals can be broken down into one or two categories: increasing revenue or decreasing costs. Understanding the intended goals of MCA for this marketing plan, a focus on increasing revenues seems more appropriate. While initially MCA may not see themselves as a traditional business entity looking to increase revenues, their sheer desire to increase awareness and visibility underscores the goal of increasing revenue. While there are multiple business goals listed, bolded are those that seem to be most pertinent to the marketing goals of MCA at this time:

**Increasing Revenues**

● **Increase Brand Visibility**

● **Increase Prospective Customer Engagement & Interest**

● **Increase Leads & Sales**

● Increase Customer Retention & Repeat Purchases

● Increase Customer Referrals & Reviews

This now answers the WHY of any recommended marketing initiatives.

Developing robust data on the demographic and psychographic characteristics of MCA’s target audiences is key to being able to build audience personas that reflect reality rather than hunches. Two key questions that need to be answered at a high level are:

1. **Who are our top 2-4 buyer personas who will actually purchase from us?**
2. **What audiences can help us spread and share our content?**

The first question is fairly subjective, but still needs to be built upon your knowledge of your customers. The second, should be pulled from actual data and developed into partnership audiences who may additionally benefit from any marketing efforts MCA engages. Contrasting these two questions will give the best idea of your true audience personas, which you can continue to refine over time. While there are numerous locations to look for customer data, for MCA’s particular target area could use these typical starting places:

**Membership lists from Economic Development/Chamber of Commerce Office within the five-county region** to pull name, location and website data on your customers.

**Look at any Facebook, Twitter and Linkedin analytics pages.** Basic information such as company name, location and similar interests should be discoverable.

**Use Universal Google Analytics** to view the demographics and affinity data and then segment down to customers who have converted in some way (downloaded a form, filled out a form, returned multiple times to review information etc).

Sometimes having a small staff can be a challenge. A few people wearing many hats often makes content development a wish, but unfortunately not a reality. Asking MCA team members this next question is critical before taking on a full marketing plan effort.

1. **Who is going to do the work?**

Thinking about who your actual doers are in the organization and where their skill set rests can provide the insight on where you need to reach for outside help.

The goal of this next question is to develop a short list of master topics that MCA wants to cover on an on-going basis that are relevant to your potential buyers throughout the inquiry journey.

1. **What can we offer to our target audiences at each stage of the customer lifecycle?**

Deciding on 2-4 high level themes that encompass what the MCA brand stands for will largely address how to produce “visibility-driven” content for your target audiences that may be early in the inquiry process or unaware of MCA as a solution. It is important to build editorial mission statements that content marketing efforts can build upon. For MCA the following are recommended:

**“We educate our readers on the potential and value of collaborating with MCA for unique locations for both large- and small-scale development.”**

**“We educate our readers on the necessary steps to work within the FAA environment and how to utilize our expertise on making for a smooth transaction.”**

The next recommendations are meant to address sales-oriented content from the MCA site that a potential customer might have at each stage of their purchase journey.

**MCA is a one stop shop for all your aviation inquiries.**

**MCA partners with you to provide the necessary information for your clients to fully examine the opportunities afforded by developing on FAA established ground.**

**MCA solves the problem of “missing a step” during a transaction that could cost you more money.**

**MCA provides easy to follow steps on what you need to prepare in order to utilize the grounds and services of the airport.**

Finding where your potential customers research or look for information about your business type is always challenging. For this question,

1. **How does our target audience find and consume content?**

The potential answers could be overwhelming if you are working on hunches. Economic Development organizations, Hanger Network sites, BiggerPockets and other real estate development sites are all potential areas for gathering information for a location like MCA.

The most effective way to gather this information is to ask your clients directly. Utilizing MCA’s tertiary audience of Corporate Aviation and Pilot Organizations may be a logical place to start. Some recommendations for reaching these and other current or potential customers include:

**Survey to existing tenants and service providers**

**Quick poll on the sidebar of the website**

**Create a list of other industry websites that potential customers will look at frequently (this includes competitors) and develop a list of interests those audiences may have and plug them into Google Ads and click “Get Placement Ideas” to find websites about these topics and their estimated traffic levels.**

**Take any potential email lists and run them through a service like FullContact to get the most common social platforms used by your customers, like Twitter, Linkedin and Facebook.**

1. **How should we differentiate within our market?**

Now it’s time for a little competitive analysis. MCA has a good handle on who their competitors are based on the product or service offerings, but you will also want to look at your “topical competitors.” Topical competitors are the websites that you’ll be competing with on social media and in search results. While at first they may seem like competitors, they can also be great partners if you’re able to build a relationship that is equally beneficial. Once you have your list:

**Plug in their domain into Buzzsumo.com to see which**

**pages on their sites have the most traction on social media.**

**Use moz.com/link-explorer or Ahrefs.com to see which pieces of content on their website have earned the best links from other websites.**

**Keep an eye out on what they are doing poorly as well – blogs that are neglected, Linkedin sites that are out of date etc. Compare these against the web channels that were identified earlier and see where you can move ahead as an industry leader.**

**Add video content to your site or set up a YouTube channel on the topic of buying and establishing a business at an airport and create informational videos on industry related topics.**

Questions 9-11 are all part of the Channel Plan, provided at the end of this document.

1. **Where do we focus our content distribution and promotional efforts?**

The channel plan will refer back to how the MCA audiences find and consume content, contrasted with how MCA wants to differentiate itself within the market and which channels can be budgeted and resources handled on an ongoing basis.

1. **When do we publish?**

This isn’t about time of day but how often you want to publish content to the website, social media, traditional media, earned and owned media. The numbers need to reflect both what you are willing to spend and what you can actually perform. Some recommended numbers have been placed, but all of this can be easily changed to fit MCA’s budget and personnel capabilities.

1. **When do we measure results?**

MCA should be updating dashboards weekly or monthly and revisiting strategy quarterly to look at how your efforts are progressing. But most importantly, you must be willing to give each strategy sufficient time to prove itself one way or the other. For example, one month of posting won’t be enough to declare success or failure on a blog, Facebook or Twitter site.

As a rule of thumb, you will need 6-12 months to truly see the full potential of any efforts unless you already have a sizeable and engaged audience.

1. **How does MCA define success?**

You answered this question during the branding exercise broadly. Now will be the time to put some specific metrics to it so you can measure your outcomes against the costs of your marketing program. Your overall statement of success was:

***MCA’s ability to increase awareness of their services and location as a development option.***

But, within that framework you need to define what success looks like. Here are some recommended primary goals and metrics to start:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Top Of Funnel | Middle of Funnel | Bottom of Funnel | Post Funnel |
| **Goal:** Build brand visibility with our target audiences. | **Goal:** Build engagement with our site visitors and educate them on our products and service options. | **Goal:** Convert engaged visitors who are viewing product and service-related website content into active clients. | **Goal:** Build customer retention, repeat business, referrals, deep engagement with partners and public reviews. |
| **Metrics:** Links, social shares, traffic, page views, phone calls, invitations to speak or present. | **Metrics:** Email subscriptions, repeat visitors, content downloads, phone calls that result in meetings. | **Metrics:** Goal conversions from leads, online inquiries, and eventual revenue growth for the company. | **Metrics:** Engagement with support content, customer churn for retention business, repeat purchases. |

**Conclusion**

MCA is looking to increase visibility and engagement with potential partners and investors. Logic infers that best efforts to begin the process is within the counties closest to home. Partnership building will be the most important first step and will cost the least amount of dollars initially. But, collateral material such as updated website, videos, Developer’s Tool Kit and other materials that help to tell the MCA story must be produced and ready to go at a moment’s notice.

The attached Channel Plan is geared towards meeting the three goals of:

Increasing Brand Visibility

Increasing Prospective Customer/Partner Engagement & Interest

Increasing Leads & Sales

Using target messaging from the Brand and Communication Platforms will assist in reinforcing MCA’s brand of expertise, availability of land and specialized information sets. Content formats that are both rich visually, engaging and in digital formats will be key to reaching the identified audience groups and build their interest and confidence in partnering and interacting with MCA.