

East Lake Boat Rentals

Marketing Plan

Proposed by

Liberty University
Strategic
Communication
Students

MAY
2022

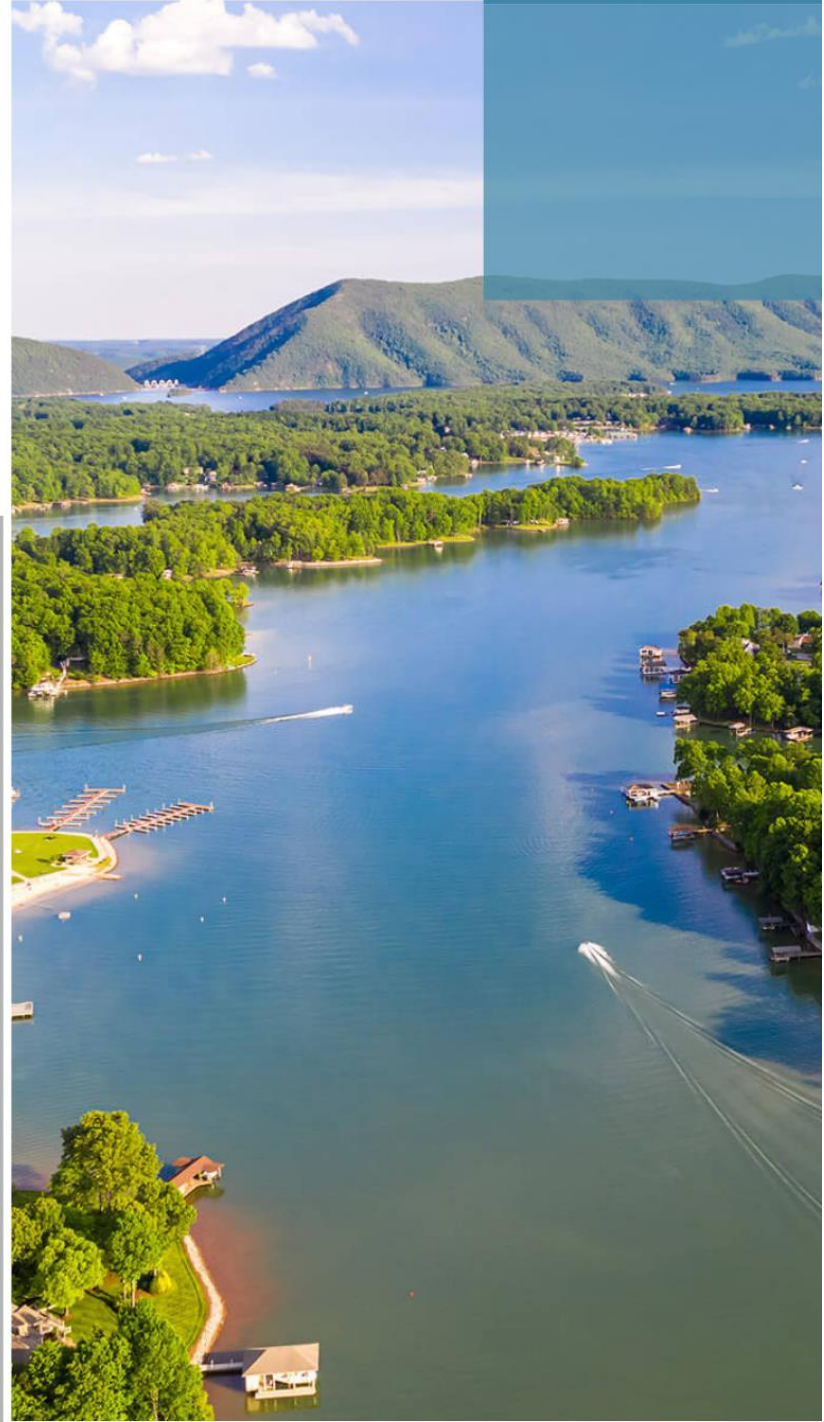


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Executive Summary

Established in 2021, East Lake Boat Rentals is a small boat rental company in Smith Mountain Lake, Virginia. The business is owned by Tim Dellis, a prominent member of the lake community, and is primarily marketed through word of mouth. Lacking new boats, established clientele, and consistent social media, ELBR struggles to build a consistent and effective brand identity. Brand awareness and boat rental sales suffer as a result.

ELBS's current target audience are parents with children, grandparents, and college students. While these are the current proposed targets, however, marketing is not specifically geared toward any of these groups. Our team has instead developed three new potential buyer personas: millennials without kids, millennials with kids, and gen x members. Segmenting East Lake's audience into three distinct personas will aid in the process of both rebranding and raising brand awareness.

East Lake Boat Rentals competes with many companies with significant name recognition and customer loyalty. The business's current advantage however is the lack of rental availability across the lake. Not only is it difficult to find a boat at any other boat rental, but they are significantly more expensive than East Lake Boat Rentals.

As a team, we propose several strategies for ELBR to build an effective brand identity, raise brand awareness, and gain an increase in sales. Each method will embody the business's three main pillars: "Affordable, Fun, & Easy", thus emphasizing their affordable and streamlined process of an exciting day on the lake. The target audience will be engaged online through visually appealing content that shows brand consistency and raises brand awareness among the local community and visitors. Traditional methods like radio and print advertisement will be implemented as well to reach customers before they even walk through the door. Further, traditional methods will allow Tim Dellis to continue reaching members of his community, whom he closely values.

Internal Research

Growing up on the lake, Tim Dellis has gained over 25 years of experience working with boat repairs and rentals; his father has been involved in this business for over 50 years. ELBR operates out of Lake Haven Marina and has about 20 boats available for patrons to rent at any given time. The business's sister company is Sherm's Boat Services, a boat repair business. East Lake Boat Rentals came to us with the problem of lacking brand awareness, which has led to a decrease in boat rentals over the course of the busy season (Memorial Day to Labor Day, with June/July as the "peak season"). In order to know the best approach to helping East Lake Boat Rentals solve this problem, our team has conducted a SWOT analysis

Strengths

The strengths of East Lake Boat Rentals include their availability, safety, affordability, family-friendliness, and personability. They are a local business and Tim Dellis specifically is well known in the lake community. Additionally, since East Lake Boat Rentals is associated with Sherm's Boat Service, boats are able to be repaired quickly and conveniently.

Weaknesses

The main weakness of East Lake Boat Rentals is their lack of brand awareness, specifically online since they do not appear in keyword searches on Google, have a weak social media presence and following, and are not found on Smith Mountain Lake activity websites. Their branding is also not the most appealing to families, and since they are a newer company, they lack the staff to offer the best customer service. Lake Haven Marina's location is also not ideal and easy to see, and customers cannot currently rent boats online in a quick and automated process.

Opportunities

ELBR's current website serves as a great foundation for additional visual components, copywriting, and advertising to increase awareness of the brand. ELBR can also take advantage of the myriad of social media sites available to them, such as Instagram, Facebook, Google Reviews, Yelp, and advertisements on VRBO. Networking with local marinas, restaurants, and integrating an online booking service for rentals, including a calendar showing availability, could be other massive opportunities for the business. Peak boating season is coming up in June and July, thus giving enough of a window to integrate new marketing strategies for the upcoming season ("BoatRentals," n.d.). Customers are also more likely to trust a family-owned business, which is a large part of ELBR's charm (Blake, 2019).

Threats

The main threats presented to East Lake Boat Rentals are the competition of Mitchell's Point Marina, Bridgewater Marina, and other boat rental services on Smith Mountain Lake which have newer boats available to customers. Lake Haven Marina also struggles with a lack of curb appeal. Since this is a seasonal industry, the majority of East Lake Boat Rentals' income comes from the summer, which is potentially unreliable. Finally, there are customers who misuse the boats they rent, which is threatening to the overall safety and sustainability of the company.

External Research

The current market landscape for East Lake Boat Rentals has it not set up well against its competitors. East Lake's biggest competitors are Bridgewater Marina, Smith Mountain Lake Boat Rental, and Parkway Marina. These competitors are ahead of East Lake Boat Rentals because of their better locations and newer boats. With East Lake being a newer business on the lake, it does not have the name recognition and the built-in loyalty that the other boat rentals have in the community. However, the competitors are frequently booked up and do not offer much availability for last-minute boat rentals. These competitors are often more expensive as well since the boats they are renting are newer. East Lake Boat Rentals could have a competitive edge in this market due to the fact that their boats are more available to customers wanting to make last-minute trips to Smith Mountain Lake, as well as the fact that East Lake's boats are more affordable than the competitors in the market.

We analyzed the current marketing tactics employed by East Lake Boat Rentals' competitors. The appearance of competitors in Google searches is a massive advantage since Mitchell's Point Marina and Bridgewater Marina are the first two boat rental services to appear in a Google search for "Smith Mountain Lake boat rentals." Additionally, the competitors consistently have at least four-star reviews on Google, with anywhere from 50-500 reviews in total. Their marketing strategies include professional images, strong copywriting, automated rental booking services, and information about the owners of the businesses. While East Lake Boat Rentals' website seems like it could be virtually anywhere, the websites and social media of their competitors are essentially Smith Mountain Lake. It is evident these businesses belong in and contribute to a community. Specifically, Bridgewater Marina uses tactics that demonstrate their relevance within the community; on any given day, they may share the opening of a local restaurant, local festivals and events, or put the spotlight on individuals within the community.

The current target audience ranges from parents and grandparents with kids to college students with no real focus on any of them. Some of the reasons that this audience either stays away from East Lake Boat Rentals or has never heard of them is because of the bad location, unkempt marina, and some bad reviews. A value that millennials have when making purchases for their children are the price and quality of the item (Field Agent, 2018). Bad reviews and older boats can have the connotation that the boats are not taken care of and are of low quality which can turn off the target.

During the summer months, the target prefers to spend time outdoors with 57% of millennials and 50.4% of Gen X found participating (Physical Activity Council, 2020). In 2020, freshwater/saltwater/fly fishing was one of the most popular outdoor activities coming in at 54%. Smith Mountain Lake is one of the most popular lakes in the area that offers many outdoor activities specifically on the lake. With the target preferring to spend time outdoors during the peak season for boat rentals, there is an opportunity for East Lake Boat Rentals to "capture" the audience. 45% of US adults are found taking multiple vacations a year and it can be a goal for East Lake to make one of those vacations at Smith Mountain Lake (Statista Survey, 2017).

Buyer Personas

Millennials without Kids

The first buyer persona for East Lake Boat Rentals is millennial couples with no kids. The names of the consumers are Anna and Ben who are a married couple with bachelor's degrees. Anna is 28 years old, and Ben is 32 years old. They work corporate jobs, and are in the office during typical day job hours. The couple makes \$85,000 a year since, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021), millennials make an average salary of \$84,975. Anna and Ben do not live near Smith Mountain Lake, and they would need to commute to rent from East Lake Boat Rentals. As a young millennial couple, Anna and Ben are both extroverted, personable, and spontaneous people who love hanging out with their friends. They also travel during their free time. Technology, new products, social media, and the outdoors are key points of interest for them, and they love to hike and explore near lakes or the ocean. Anna and Ben find it important to save and spend their money on experiences rather than on material objects. The couple exercises their value of new experiences this way.

Millennials with Kids

The second buyer persona for East Lake Boat Rentals is a millennial couple with children. The couple is named Susan and Vince, and they have two young children named Ellie and Alex. Susan is 29, Vince is 35, Ellie is 5, and Alex is 3. With their joined incomes, Susan and Vince make an annual income of \$95,000. The family resides in Lynchburg, Virginia, where Susan is a stay-at-home mother while Vince works as a full-time contractor. Susan and Vince are very safety-oriented, heavily researching everything before they make purchase decisions. They search for easy and streamlined processes. Susan prefers organization and planners while Vince is more spontaneous. Both enjoy new experiences and value fun, safe, and affordable vacations that allow them to spend time as a family. Vince and Susan are big supporters of small businesses and love family-oriented brands.

Gen X

The third buyer persona for East Lake Boat Rentals is Generation X couples with older children. The couple is named Tom and Jennifer who are locals to Smith Mountain Lake. Tom is a financial planner, and Jennifer works as a freelance graphic designer. They make a joint annual income of \$110,000 a year. Tom and Jennifer have a daughter named Allison who is 16 years old and a son named Josh who is 13 years old. Tom and Jennifer deeply value and prioritize their family. According to MultiSafePay (2021), "Gen X consumers keep safety and security in high regard, and act accordingly" (para. 11). Tom and Jennifer are thus motivated to provide financially for their family and safety for their children. The spending habits of Generation X are generous in comparison to others, and MultiSafePay (2021) states, "The majority of their spending goes towards their house, but another significant part of their spending is dedicated to traveling and food/eating-out at restaurants" (para. 3). Generation X makes the most money in comparison to other groups, so their spending habits and budget are likely to be higher (MultiSafePay, 2021). Tom and Jennifer are willing to spend money more frequently for their family to spend time together, and they go out either as a couple or family.

Brand Guide

Typefaces

HEADING: Mrs Eaves XL Serif Nar OT Heavy

Subheading: Mrs Eaves XL Serif Nar OT Bold Italic

Body Copy: FreightNeo Pro Book

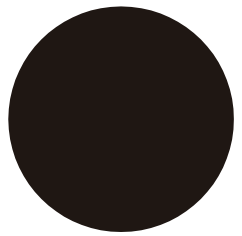
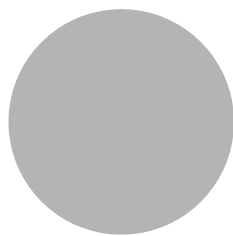
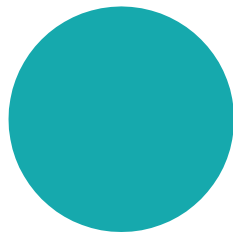
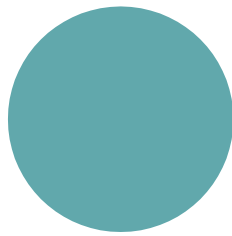
PERFORMANCE PONTOON

Performance Pontoon

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Color Palette



Strategy Recommendations

Buyer Persona: Gen X

Strategy: Develop content on the existing Facebook page with a content calendar

Research: Eastlake Boat Rentals wants to reach Gen X and Millennial families. To do this, they need to be where they are, which is online. Research shows that Gen X uses Facebook the most, followed by Millennials (Pew Research Center, 2021). Furthermore, compared to other social media platforms, mothers use Facebook the most (Edison Research, 2018). This is relevant to consider since they make 80% of the shopping decisions in their families (Schaeffer, 2019). Developing the business's current Facebook page is essential for gaining recognition and effective engagement with desired consumers.

Execution: Three Facebook features should be used for development: posts, stories, and reels. Studies show that 50% of consumers prefer discovering new products through Facebook Stories (Martin, 2022). Reels have similar importance, as Facebook is only second to YouTube for short-form video sharing. Shared content increases the chances of discovery and trust. Lastly, posts are good for text-heavy or static content. Along with the use of these features, it is highly recommended that a consistent update schedule be followed. Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8am-12pm is best since consumers are more likely to be awake and online (e.g., lunch break). Early May is a good time to start releasing content as boat rental searches pick up. Kids don't get out of school until June either, allowing parents enough time to plan ahead.

Rationale: Concerning the specific content, Eastlake Boat Rentals needs to make posts, stories, and reels that have emotional and experiential appeal. From the research compiled, families ultimately want to escape the stresses of daily responsibilities and spend time doing life with those they love in a safe, beautiful location. ELBR can meet these needs by providing boats that are safe, easy, fun, and affordable in the ideal location. When creating content, however, Eastlake Boat Rentals needs to communicate to families that they can fulfill these needs without focusing on the boats themselves. This gives families a deeper reason to rent from the business.

The following are example posts:

1. Make a post welcoming family to Smith Mountain Lake. Introduce it as being a safe haven, ideal for families looking to make memories in a short time.
2. Make a post or story visually showing ELBR getting ready for the summer season. Show the fleet of boats and hint that tubes and fishing packages are available for purchase. Involve owner Tim Dellis to help humanize the brand.

“Getting the boats out and shining them up to the best condition. We're look forward to meeting you and your family this summer!”

3. Appeal to busy parents who finally have a day off. Highlight summer activities and that ELBR will take care of everything thus making it easier on everyone.

“It's been a busy year, but the summer is finally coming which means swimming, fishing, boating, tubing, or simply just breathing in the fresh air. Come visit us at the lake where we'll take care of all the heavy stuff.”

Strategy: Create an Email Newsletter

East Lake Boat Rentals should create a regular email newsletter to better reach their Generation X audience where they are already spending their time.

Research: While Generation X still uses other forms of digital media, their attention is still set on using emails. According to MultiSafepay (2021), “although this medium has suffered in popularity for other demographics, email marketing is still the best way to reach Gen X consumers” (para. 7). The research also showed that 68% of the Generation X audience say they use the coupons that they get in their emails. Therefore, a consistent email newsletter with discounts included in them would be an effective tactic for East Lake Boat Rentals to use in their marketing plan.

Execution: The brand has an email address that is on their website for customers to contact them. However, there is no newsletter or discount that they send to customers. Ideally, the email newsletter would be sent every other week. East Lake Boat Rentals would start by sending it to existing customers. To build their audience, the brand could offer a link on their website for people to sign up for the newsletter and offer existing customers a discount on their next rental if they refer a friend to sign up for the email newsletter. The tactic could be used in many ways to reach an audience, and with that in mind, it leaves a lot of opportunity for East Lake Boat Rentals to utilize it for building their sales and better recognition of their brand.

Rationale: While digital tactics like social media and website advertisements are popular and growing tactics for building brand awareness, Generation X is unique in their continued appreciation for email. The email newsletter may not reach the other buyer personas in the same way that it does with Generation X, however, it is an effective way to focus on this unique segmentation. By emailing their consumers, East Lake Boat Rentals would be able to regularly have their brand seen by Generation X and potentially receive more bookings if they add discounts within their messages.

Strategy: Make flyers

Execution: There could be a designed flyer that gives information about East Lake Boat Rentals and information on contacting him. It would have the address, email, and a phone number listed at the bottom. This is a great way to get the word out about the company and the flyer can be eye catching. People appreciate things that are simple and to the point and flyers are a great way to accomplish that. The flyer could also be posted on multiple social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. It's a way to market that is an affordable way to promote, easy, and creative. Flyers can be targeted to every generation, so none are excluded. Details in the flyer are also very important because it answers the basic questions people may have and gives them information.

Rationale: When making the flyer, it's important to have a great graphic and focus on the benefits of the company, have a call to action, and print them in high quality. All of these play a role in making the flyer successful. They can be made on Canva or even Adobe and there are multiple design options. You can make them creative and change information if needed. However, the content would be simple and not too much information, because if it has too much information then it won't keep people's attention. On the bottom of the flyer, there can be a discount option for purchasing a first boat rental, people would be more interested.

One good quote that talks about design is by Susan Kare and she says, "Good design's not about what medium you're working in. It's about thinking hard about what you want to do and what you have to work with before you start." The design is as important as the information on the flyer.

Strategy: Promotional Video

Research: Members of Gen X generally are in a mid-life stage, dealing with the stressors of both work and family simultaneously (Hoffower & Kierz, 2021). Therefore, Gen X families are looking for fun, easy, and affordable ways to enjoy family time together amidst busy work weeks.

Execution: A promotional video that portrays the ease of the boat rental process when booking through East Lake Boat Rentals. This video will also seek to portray the “story” of a family renting a boat on Smith Mountain Lake for the weekend. Additionally, the video will exemplify the ease East Lake Boat Rentals creates for its customers each step of the way, allowing busy families to step away from their responsibilities for the day or weekend in a safe, easy, and affordable manner.

In order to execute this promotional tactic, a videographer, editor, and a “mock family” will be necessary. These professionals can be accessed and hired as a project-based contract. A shot list and script will need to be prepared ahead of time, leaving filming itself to last 2-3 days in total. An additional 3-5 days will be necessary to account for the video to be edited, polished, and uploaded to the East Lake Boat Rentals website. The video will be best utilized when posted on the landing page of the website, to be easily accessed and readily seen by anyone who visits the website.

Rationale: Utilizing professional videography, step-by-step portrayal of the easy rental process from start to finish, and emotional appeal, the promotional video will seek to best advertise East Lake Boat Rentals in the most tangible manner possible. Additionally, to deliver information on the steps of the boat rental process in a readily accessible and easily delivered manner. By emphasizing the idea of “family time,” parents and children will easily be able to picture themselves on the lake, therefore increasing the appeal for Gen X families, the specified target audience.

Strategy: Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Execution: Search engine marketing is essentially paid ads for specific Google searches (Forsey, 2020). Companies can cause their website to be seen as a listing, or an advertisement, in a Google search, often very high up on the page. For East Lake Boat Rentals, the ad could be targeted to specific locations such as the regions surrounding Smith Mountain Lake. Additionally, the ad can be customized to appear only with certain keywords, phrases, or even when individuals search the name of one of East Lake Boat Rentals' competitors.

Generally, this tactic is pay-per-click, meaning that the initial ad placement is free, but East Lake Boat Rentals would have to determine a budget and Google will cater the ad placement according to how many clicks the company can afford.

For this ad, East Lake Boat Rentals could run an ad with the heading of their search engine listing stating, "Affordable, Safe, & Fun Smith Mountain Lake Rentals." The description underneath the heading would state, "Get out on a boat today! Easy and fast booking process." The link would go directly to East Lake Boat Rentals' website.

East Lake Boat Rentals can determine which keywords would be best to target through Google Trends, which is a way of tracking search trends in real-time. Additionally, using the demographics researched by the class can be beneficial in determining the targets of this advertisement. Here is a link to a free guide to Google Ads, in case it is of use to East Lake Boat Rentals.

Rationale: It has already been established that East Lake Boat Rentals struggles with their placement on Google or other popular search engines. Increasing visibility on search engines takes a lot of strategic effort and time, which is definitely important and worth investing time and energy into. However, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) can be a way to increase visibility on search engines in a shorter span of time, such as a few weeks over the summer (Audi & Karam, 2019).

Strategy: Geofenced / Geotargeting Ads on Google Maps

Goals: Geotargeted ads have a massive opportunity to access individuals with smartphones based on location and behavior. A large majority of Gen X individuals use smartphones. Through this tactic we hope to increase awareness and traffic to East Lake Boat Rentals website and storefront

Execution: To make this happen, the best choice is to find a “Geotargeting” focused advertising business or app. The company “GroundTruth” is an example of a company like that. With Gen X making up more than 42% of the Google Maps users this app would be great to use. You have to make sure that whatever service you pick is compatible with both iPhone and Android devices as to not lose a potential 50% of the target audience. Keywords to look up when finding out more about this topic are; Geofenced ads, Geotargeting, location-based marketing, geomarketing, and location targeting.

Rationale: According to an article on AdMall, Gen X makes up a little more than 42% of Google Maps users (SalesFuel, 2021). This data combined with the off-the-beaten-path location of East Lake Boat rentals makes geotargeting advertisements a perfect fit. Geotargeting Ads work by using location-based targeting. Whether your target is nearby in a parking lot, driving near the location, or looking up directions to “Smith Mountain Lake boat rentals” you can advertise to these people through geotargeting ads. The locations picked for the ads will be entrances to Smith Mountain Lake, along nearby highways, and nearby competitor locations. They will be placed in high-traffic areas.

Strategy: Creative Rebrand

Goals: The goal of a creative rebrand for East Lake Boat Rentals is to create a more professional and established look for the company. The hope of the re-brand will be to not only draw people to the website but to keep their attention and make East Lake Boat Rental a name they remember.

Execution: Changing the fonts, pictures, and colors on the website, as well as adjusting the logo will create a more welcoming and friendly first impression for potential customers. These new colors for the website and overall, for their brand guide keep to the nautical theme, with two blue shades, a light gray, cream, and black. New pictures of Tim, the owner, as well as the boats and the lake are highly suggested. This will put a face to the company, as well as the area in which he is renting his boats. Headline fonts will be changed to a more professional type, like Mrs Eaves XL Serif.

Rationale: With East Lake Boat Rentals being a fairly new company, their creativity is underdeveloped. Good branding creates trust and shows potential customers that the business is established and credible. East Lake Boat Rentals currently has a dark color scheme with colors like green and black throughout the website and logo. There are minimal pictures and videos, especially of the boats they currently have available. The fonts do not communicate a professional business, and the logo could be slightly adjusted with colors.

Buyer Persona: Millennials Without Kids

Strategy: Create a YouTube channel

Goals: The goal is to create a YouTube channel that will benefit East Lake Boatrentals. After creating a YouTube channel it is important to add content that is fun, family-friendly, and entertaining. East Lake Boat rentals will be able to add content that shows a day on the lake or a video that shares a step-by-step tutorial of what to do when renting a boat. East Lake Boat Rentals goal is to start the channel and create fun enjoyable content that people can watch and share with friends and family. This will get their name out and help create content that people can enjoy.

Execution: Creating a YouTube channel for East Lake Boat Rentals to be able to post weekly videos about their boats, tutorials, and experiences you will get on the lake. The idea of this would be to begin with creating an account for East Lake Boat Rentals to start with. After adding the YouTube account, then add the East Lake Boat rentals logo to the front of it and add a background as well as a bio for the channel so that people will know what it is about.

Rationale: East Lake Boat Rentals currently has no YouTube account. By creating a YouTube channel, East Lake Boat Rentals will be able to reach millennial couples with no kids and Gen Z through creating a YouTube account that they can follow. YouTube will allow East Lake Boat Rentals to show up on search results such as Google and improve rankings. YouTube also benefits a company that is wanting to reach multiple people. It allows a company to reach over 30 thousand people by creating content for people to watch. Videos are becoming extremely popular and are taking over, therefore, creating a YouTube account will only boost East Lake Boat Rentals by sharing all that they are about. YouTube will be a great way to promote the company while also reaching millennials who are on YouTube often.

Strategy: Create Instagram account for ELBR with promotional content

Research: According to Sprout Social (2022), “Millennials are using Instagram more than any other platform. Recent research shows that 60 percent of Instagram’s users are between the ages of 18 and 29, with 42 percent of those users visiting the site at least once per day. In fact, some studies find that millennials interact more on social media than they do in real life.” Therefore, to promote East Lake Boat rentals, Instagram would be an amazing way to do so.

Execution: According to Benson (2018), “Millennials particularly enjoy Instagram Stories...the time limit of these videos makes it easier for you to streamline your message, and you can keep their attention longer.” The post and story series would be a series of photos of people on East Lake Boat Rental boats having fun with a description of their affordability and sustainability. In addition to that, the stories and posts would also contain positive user reviews so people could see how reliable East Lake Boat rentals is.

“According to Sprout’s analysis, the best times to post on Instagram are Tuesday 11 a.m.–2 p.m. and Monday through Friday 11 a.m. The worst day to post is Sunday.” Posting during these time frames will help boost business because more millennials will view them and be more likely to rent a boat from East Lake Boat rentals.

Rationale: Social media is a major part of the marketing world. Instagram is one of the most popular forms of social media used today. East Lake Boat Rentals does not currently have an Instagram account, so creating one and posting stories and posts would be very beneficial to the business in regard to attracting millennial couples with no kids who just want to rent a boat.

Strategy: Yelp Business Page

Research: According to Yelp (n.d.), 36% of users are aged 35-54 and 33% are aged 55 and older. Additionally, 33 million unique apps exist on users' devices and nearly 244 million reviews have been posted. After searching for "boat rentals" and specifically "East Lake Boat Rentals," ELBR did not show on either search term. However, competitors such as Parrot Cove Boat Rentals, Smith Mountain Lake Boat Rentals, and Bridgewater Marina Boat Rentals ranked in the top three when sorted by "Recommended." This is due to the higher number of positive ratings for these companies, and they all averaged 3.5 to 4 stars overall. According to a report published by Statista Global Consumer Survey (2022), Yelp users are predominantly female, are 25 to 34 years old, live in an urban area, and have two to four people in their household. Therefore, this platform should mainly target Millennials with no kids and Gen X. Yelp is another way that ELBR can improve its SEO to increase brand awareness as more people search for boat rentals this summer.

Execution: Another strategy proposed to East Lake Boat Rentals is to claim a Yelp business page. Yelp is a forum used by millions of consumers to find honest reviews and company information. Many people consult reviews when deciding between any number of options, ensuring they make the best selection with the information they have.

Rationale: The goal of the Yelp business page would be related to brand awareness in addition to improving SEO, as mentioned earlier. Having a consistent name, contact information, and reviews will allow ELBR to be found more easily by people searching for boat rentals at Smith Mountain Lake. ELBR can implement this strategy by first claiming the page and filling it out completely. Then, they can encourage customers to leave reviews there and on Google Reviews. ELBR would also benefit from interacting with reviews, both positive and negative, as it further increases engagement and brand trust.

Strategy: Create a Direct Mail Coupon

Goals: The goals of this direct mail coupon are to bring in more millennial couples without kids to rent boats, utilizing the coupon they received. The coupon will coincide with the company's branding, colors, etc., and will be enticing to the eye. Hopefully, the use of a direct mailing system will reach new customers but also continue reaching previous customers, encouraging them to come back to East Lake Boat Rentals. With the intent of offering a discount to couples without kids, the coupon will be of interest to couples for anniversary fun, an exciting date, and more! Using the direct mail coupon will be a helpful way to advertise and market East Lake Boat Rentals, rather than solely word-to-mouth advertisement.

Execution: For this marketing idea, the company would create a direct mail coupon to be mailed to locals in the area. It would be specifically targeted towards millennial couples without kids, and the coupon itself would be a "couples' coupon," and would offer a slight discount for a boat rental with East Lake Boat Rentals.

Rationale: At this current time, there is no such thing as a direct mail coupon that East Lake Boat Rentals already executes. Because millennials tend to be between 19-39, a large portion of these millennials are in their late 30's, turning 40. In this case, these millennials will still have a heart for direct mail items. Items such as newspapers, hard copies for paperwork, etc. The direct mail coupon will interest their eyes, and capture the desire for renting a boat, for cheaper. Utilizing the U.S. Data Corporation website (n.d.) and, more specifically, using their targeting lists would aid the creation of a targeted direct mail list for this specific audience. Basing the list off the demographics, age, location, household size (aiming for no kids), etc.

Strategy: Website Update with Online Booking and Links from Socials

Research: Millennials are individuals that make up most of the workforce. They are looking for a quick and easy method to achieve their goals-one being their desire for adventures. Using Instagram more than any other platform, this strategy is to attach East Lake Boat Rentals website to their social media accounts (BUSINESS*). This would not only include adding it to bios and summaries but creating posts that promote their website specifically. With the increased traffic to their website, East Lake Boat Rentals should update their website, both aesthetically and functionally. By simply changing the color from green to blue, this shift can better portray the identity of the business. While the business is functional, it must include an online booking option. Because millennials are searching for “Affordable, Fun, & Easy”, the company should put this into practice by making their booking process more efficient.

Rationale: By offering an online booking option and promoting the website through social media, this strategy can both increase traffic to the website and keep it there. It emphasizes the brand’s motto and allows the entire experience with East Lake Boat Rentals to remain online until they arrive at the lake. By increasing awareness of the website and making the process more aesthetically pleasing and functional, customers will be more inclined to rent from East Lake Boat Rentals.

Buyer Persona: Millennials with Kids

Strategy: Implementation of a Facebook & Instagram giveaway

Goals: One of the biggest goals for the rebranding campaign is to get the word out about East Lake Boat Rentals and create better connections with the clients and community.

Execution: A great first step to establishing their brand is to be consistently present on social media. The two best platforms that appeal to the 25–35-year-old demographic are Instagram and Facebook, and it would be there to initiate a brand giveaway. Tim has not done anything like this before, but this will help gain more traction through his social media accounts and website. The giveaway will consist of some lake day items like sunscreen, a cooler, drinkkoozies, water floaties, and a full-day pass on the lake. Instagram and Facebook will be running their own giveaways at different times, in order to appeal to different audiences.

To enter the giveaway, one must follow the account, like the post, tag two people in the comments and they may repost it on their story for an extra entry. The giveaway will run for two weeks starting on May 18th and ending on June 1st. The winner must use the free day pass within the year 2022 as this encourages the contestants to start thinking about summer plans. Many other brands have run giveaways similarly to this, and it is not common amongst the competing boat rental companies. This is a great and natural way for East Lake Boat Rental to promote their company and extend their pool of customers.

Rationale: This tactic may be successful for the buyer persona of young millennial families since they are the prime users of both Instagram and Facebook. Typically, this demographic is savvy with their money and is always looking for the best deal. Luckily, East Lake Boat Rental is just what they are looking for, and this giveaway is a great way to make them aware of the company.

Strategy: Local advertising on Smith Mountain Lake vacation and travel websites

Execution: In an effort to promote awareness and increase interactions online, placing ads on the activities page for the local Smith Mountain Lake Vacation and Travel websites will bring East Lake Boat Rentals to the attention of vacationers interested in renting boats near Lake Haven Marina.

Each of the pages found below includes an activities page filled with ideas for Smith Mountain Lake vacationers. You can find the best local restaurants, outdoor activities, indoor activities, shopping, and local boat rentals based on your marina of choice. The websites include a “contact us” page or a direct email to the website creators that would allow East Lake Boat Rentals to contact them and share company information for the website. The email ought to include: the company name, contact information, location (including marina), and statement of interest in regard to sharing information on that website.

Rationale: Contacting the creators of these pages and sharing company contact information will help with East Lake Boat Rentals number one goal: greater outreach. By using these outside sources that are easily accessible to Smith Mountain Lake vacationers, Tim will see a heavy amount of exposure and reach those who are not as knowledgeable about the area. Contacting these sources will create a greater amount of exposure for East Lake Boat Rentals.

People who have never been to the Smith Mountain Lake area will use these websites to find credible companies to partner with on their lake adventures. East Lake Boat Rentals can now expand their clientele by using outside advertisement sources that are accessible online.

East Lake Boat Rentals wants to compete with the other boat rental facilities in the area, therefore, they need to be found in the same place as their competitors. Outsiders will have a better chance of finding East Lake Boat Rentals if their online presence goes beyond their official website.

Strategy: Search Engine Optimization of the website

Goals: To create an easily viewable and accessible home place for customers searching for a boat rental, East Lake Boat Rentals should implement a SearchEngine Optimization (SEO) strategy to their website.

Execution: To implement an SEO strategy, owners of the company should include strategic keywords into the East Lake Boat Rental company website. Keywords are wording that potential clients would “search” on Google or other browsers to find boat rental options.

Currently, the Search Engine Optimization of this website is very low. When doing a basic search, “smith mountain lake boat rentals,” East Lake Boat Rentals does not seem to even exist according to Google. This is not good for the company, especially since alternative options, existing at the same lake, are the first to show up and run through a whole list of other options. Since East Lake Boat Rentals is a relatively new company and there is not much brand recognition among lake boaters, Search Engine Optimization is key to driving potential customers to their website homepage.

Rationale: To begin the Search Engine Optimization process, research should be conducted to determine the most valuable keywords that are relating to the services provided by East Lake Boat Rentals. These words that should be included include but are not limited to: pontoon boats, boat rentals, smith mountain lake boat rentals, affordable boat, affordable boat rentals, deck boat rentals, speed boat rentals, tube rentals, smith mountain lake, Bedford, Virginia, Virginia boat rentals, family fun, family activities, affordable family activity, affordable vacation.

By including these words in the copy and titles of the website, East LakeBoat Rentals will attract clients who are searching for activities to entertain their family, and clients looking for boat rentals on the lake. These searches will draw the keywords from the website to bring East Lake Boat Rental’s web-site to a higher listing on an average Google search.

Strategy: Print advertisements in the form of signs on the street and “postcards”

Signs along the main thoroughfare and advertisement “postcards” to put in local restaurants and businesses in the area.

Execution: East Lake Boat Rentals is currently found along the main thoroughfare in Smith Mountain Lake, also known as the Smith Mountain Lake Parkway, but it is so far down to the end of the road that very few people even know it exists. The goal of this strategy is to first set signs up along the parkway so people will not stop before they get to East Lake. Most will stop at a certain point, but if signs are set up along the way, people can follow along until they get to the business.

Signs will be implemented starting 5 miles out and with signs coming around every mile. As someone gets closer to the property there will be more frequency in signs. Along with the signs, postcards will be created and distributed to the businesses along the parkway and in the surrounding areas. For the families that have not planned their vacations to the minute or the locals that just have a free day in the summer, they will visit any of these businesses and see these postcards for a business they have never heard of, but offer an opportunity to get on the lake for an affordable price.

Rationale: These strategies are effective because it gives East Lake an opportunity to get exposure in the community. There could be an incentive to bring in one of these cards for either a slight discount on the rental or something extra thrown in for free like a tube. These cards and signs could be designed in Illustrator or Canva. The postcard strategy will be used so people know the business exists while the sign strategy will help people know where the business actually is.

Strategy: Local radio advertisement

Execution: Local radio station, WSLK RADIO 880 AM and 98.3 FM, is run by Tim and “WSLK is the only radio station licensed to Smith Mountain Lake. Let us help you reach the lake community with your message!” Tim Dellis would contact Tim at WSLK RADIO via email to chat rates,

Good afternoon,

This is Tim Dellis. I hope this email finds you well. I am contacting you to discuss a business proposition.

As you may know, I am the owner of East Lake Boat Rentals. We would love to work with you! I am looking to partner with local businesses like yours.

If you are interested and have the time to discuss what this partnership could look like, please contact me at (phone #) or at this email.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Sincerely,
Tim Dellis

Tim Dellis’ pre-recorded at the studio script could go something like this, “Hey guys this is Tim from East Lake Boat Rental. We are the most affordable boats on the lake! We are family friendly, fun, and safe. Come out and book your boat today at eastlakeboatrental.com to get a streamlined, personalized experience with our local, small business.”

Rationale: Being a well-established presence in the community with many connections, this type of advertising would allow Tim to take advantage of this position and further establish connections in the community while increasing brand awareness. Additionally, advertisements of this variety will increase brand awareness through word of mouth around the community.

Strategy: Local Business Partnership

To appeal to the specific buyer persona of millennial couples with children, the strategy of partnering with a local business appeal to this persona while fulfilling the objective of the theme for this promotional movement by helping to rebrand the company.

Execution: While it would be ideal to form partnerships with several other businesses in the area of a variety of different services and purposes, this strategy focuses on the partnership of a single, targeted business. The strategy would involve a partnership with Virginia Dare Cruises and Marina. Less than fifteen minutes away from East Lake Boat Rentals, this business serves as a local restaurant, marina, and entertainment service. The way that East Lake Boat rental would partner with this business would be through mutual advertising and additional compensation.

Virginia Dare Cruises and Marina does not rent boats but hosts many events throughout the year including events for Fourth of July, Mother's Day, etc. as well as hosting an almost weekly musical artist to perform at their lakeside restaurant. ELBR will pay to be advertised and recommended by the business on materials at the events including banners, flyers, business cards, and ads on menus in the restaurant and cruises. These print menus would advertise the brand of the company focusing on its affordability and brand values. The print ads would be available on the cruise offered by the marina, on the live music events, on menus, and signs around the marina. Signs and print ads will advertise what and where the business is and how close it is to the marina. ELBR will refill their boats with gas from their marina and recommend their marina for goods and meals through word of mouth and printed materials.

Rationale: The goal of this strategy is to establish another connection with a central traffic hub to attract more potential customers through the use of exposure to the target audience. This business and this type of partnership were chosen for a few different reasons such as for its location, services, and customer base. Located less than fifteen minutes away on the same side of the lake, the business appears close enough to be a viable partner while the services it provides with gas and a marina would attract customers. Additionally, the restaurant and cruise services that the business provides are both appeal to the target persona of this promotional strategy. The cruise service attracts families looking for something to do and the restaurant is a local restaurant targeting tourists. Additionally, this business hosts many different events throughout the summer that target both tourists and locals alike. Finally, this business was also targeted because all of the services it provides do not conflict with the interests of East Lake Boat Rentals.

This business is in a prime location that does not compete with East Lake and would offer what is needed the most by East Lake, exposure to potential clients. The major concerns of this strategy regard logistics. The actual implementation would be relatively cheap and simple for both sides. The larger question is whether both sides would agree to a partnership and the cost of such a partnership.

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