

Mapleton Communications Campaign

Tippie College of Businesses



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Course led by Prof. Amy Jo
Reimer-Myers

Catherine Clark

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Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities

Provost's Office of Outreach and Engagement

The University of Iowa

111 Jessup Hall

Iowa City, IA, 52241

Email: iisc@uiowa.edu

Website: <http://iisc.uiowa.edu/>

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Catherine Clark

Strategic Communication Consulting

14330 West 116th Street

Apartment 2420

Olathe, Kansas 66062

To: Marie Whiteing
C/O Rebuild and Recover Mapleton Long Term Recovery Board
26 Elmwood Drive
Mapleton, Iowa 51034

Dear Marie,

First of all, allow me to express my deepest sympathies for the devastation the city of Mapleton and the residents endured as a result of an F3 tornado that hit on April 9th, 2011. As an Iowa native, I understand the severe weather threats we live with every season, and I have the most genuine respect for anyone who has ever had to rebuild and recover from such a horrendous weather event. Thank you for the opportunity to build upon the recovery efforts that have already been done by offering some concepts for a strategic communication campaign that would be of major recreational and economic value to Mapleton.

The target audience of the campaign would be “staycationers” of varying age groups in local metropolitan areas and college towns. Campaign objectives center around Generation Y¹ parents from Des Moines, Omaha, and Sioux City seeing Mapleton as a destination for family-friendly weekend day trips, as well as Generation Z² college students from Ames and Vermillion seeing Mapleton as a place to explore “clean eating”. In the next page, I will provide an overview of some prospective logistics for utilizing Mapleton’s name to its best advantage, therefore making the town a hot spot for maple syrup commerce in the region, as well as the accompanying strategic communication campaign that will promote it. The goal is to increase tourism revenue in Mapleton, such as restaurants and shops, and give the town a unique brand image that will help it thrive in its part of Iowa for years to come.

¹ Those people in the general population with birth dates from the early 1980s through the early 2000s.

² Those people in the general population with birth dates from the early 2000s through the 2010s.

Overview of creative ideas for the campaign

A plan to promote Mapleton

Message

For the Generation Z college student, the message will be a competitive comparison of a popular store shelf syrup versus Mapleton's product. Pure maple syrup is a recommended "clean sugar" in the "clean eating" movement, which means it is better to consume compared to the high fructose corn syrup that makes up the syrups you can find on typical store shelves today.

Ingredients

High fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, water, salt, cellulose gum, molasses, natural and artificial flavor (lactic acid), sodium hexametaphosphate, preservatives (potassium sorbate, sodium benzoate), caramel color, citric acid



Ingredients

100% pure grade A maple syrup

For the Generation Y parent in a metropolitan city, such as Omaha, Sioux City, or Des Moines, the message will utilize the competitive comparison, but instead of being framed in the "clean eating" movement, the emphasis will be on feeding your family the natural choice.

The call to action for both target audiences will be to make Mapleton, Iowa your destination to:

- Pick up a pint of maple syrup
- Indulge in the signature food item (a recipe that will be created using Mapleton's maple syrup)
- Attend the family-friendly annual event, MapleFest

Media Plan

Locally, the campaign would focus on the three metropolitan cities and two college towns. I have ranked them top to bottom in order of the estimated impact the campaign will have based on drive time, population, and access to other MapleFests within less drive time.

Target Audience

	Drive Time (Hours:Minutes)	Population	Other MapleFests within same drive time
Omaha, NE	01:30	434,000	0
Sioux City, IA	00:55	82,000	0
Vermillion, SD	01:30	20,000*	0
Ames, IA	02:30	96,000*	2
Des Moines, IA	02:30	207,000	2

**Population includes students at the university*

I would create visually-appealing, informative ads about Mapleton and MapleFest that I would arrange to appear in regional, state, and local media.

Advertising Based on Location

	Regional	State	Local
Print & Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midwest Living • MidwestWeekends.com 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Iowa • Iowa Outdoors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sioux City Journal • Des Moines Register • OmahaMagazine.com • Omaha.com • University student publications (USD, ISU, community college)
Television	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Television • News

Note: All media listed in this table are also on social media

N/A = The cost of state and regional television advertising would not be worth it due to the small target audience.

Website

The city's website domain name, Mapleton.com, is simple and easy to remember. This is perfect for advertisements that would end in, "Go to Mapleton.com." In order for the campaign to be successful, I feel the website would need to be redesigned in order to be more aesthetically pleasing and easily navigable.

Here are some good examples:

- WillametteWines.com
- OutdoorNebraska.gov
- Travellowa.com

Additionally, content would be added for other attractions in the area, such as the local round barn and the Loess Hills Lavender Farm. This will further influence “staycationers” to visit the area because there is more than one attraction.

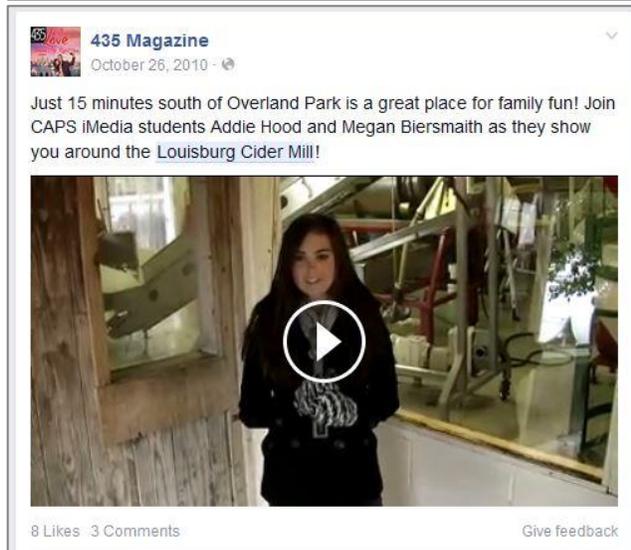
Social Media

The campaign would establish social media pages for Mapleton. The desired outcome would be much like Louisburg Cider Mill in Louisburg, Kansas is experiencing on social media. If someone were to search “Mapleton” on Facebook after this campaign he or she would see the city is tagged when:

- Local publications post videos or articles about it
- Visitors post selfies to their individual pages



A Facebook post from the page 'iFamilyKC' dated October 7, 2012. The post text reads: "Looking for a fun Sunday with the family?! Head to Louisburg, Kansas for the [Louisburg Cider Mill Ciderfest!!](#) Today until 6:00 enjoy their bright pumpkin patch, delicious food, live entertainment, and fresh, warm apple cider!". Below the text is a promotional graphic for a 'Family Perks Card' with the text 'The little book with BIG resource' and 'Here for Your Perks'. To the right of the graphic is a text box titled 'Louisburg Cider Mill Ciderfest!!' listing activities: 'Louisburg Cider Mill Ciderfest!! September 29th & 30th and October 6th & 7th Pumpkin Patch – Craft Fair Fresh Cider Making -Cider Donuts – Live Music Food – Picnic Area - Pony Rides Moonwalk – Giant Slide – Fall Produce Pancake Breakfast (9 am – 11)'. The website 'FAMILYKC.COM' is listed at the bottom.



A Facebook post from the page '435 Magazine' dated October 26, 2010. The post text reads: "Just 15 minutes south of Overland Park is a great place for family fun! Join CAPS iMedia students Addie Hood and Megan Biersmaith as they show you around the [Louisburg Cider Mill](#)!". Below the text is a video player showing a woman in a black hoodie standing in front of a wooden structure, likely part of the cider mill. The video has a play button icon in the center. At the bottom left, it says '8 Likes 3 Comments' and at the bottom right, 'Give feedback'.



A Facebook post from Cathy Clark dated October 4, 2015, from Louisburg. The post text reads: "Did Ciderfest with cousin Mary today! Sampled some hot apple cider and got lots of apple goodies to bring back. Cider donuts for the office tomorrow!". Below the text is a collage of three photos. The largest photo shows two women sitting at a table outdoors, smiling and holding red cups of cider. The smaller photo on the left shows the same two women eating a red apple. The smaller photo on the right shows a woman standing in front of a red barn with 'LOUISBURG CIDER MILL' written on it. At the bottom left, it says '15 Likes 2 Comments' and at the bottom right, 'Give feedback'.

Partnerships & Sponsorships

Partnering with other local and regional companies that have a goal to get good products to the people would be a part of this campaign. Something that Louisburg Cider Mill also does very well is partner with Hy-Vee to make its product available for purchase in the produce section of stores in larger markets. The Cider Mill also has

its own country store on site with local honey, jams, and home décor on sale, which is the result of partnerships it has made with other local producers. There is even a dessert wine on sale at the winery down the road with apple cider in it! With all the knowledge the Mapleton board members have of their local area, I am certain successful partnerships could play a part in the success of this campaign, and the success of Mapleton for years to come.

While it is apparent there is much financial support from the state government and grants, certain aspects of this campaign, such as those that open youth up to nature, qualify it for a sponsorship from funds such as the Cabela's Outdoor Fund (Cabelas.com/category/outdoor-fund/112097880.uts). Ceasing opportunities such as these would allow more funding to go into the areas of the project and campaign that sponsors feel would benefit the people and the area.

How can the local community get involved?

Of course, there are ways the eager residents of Mapleton can lend their efforts to this cause. According to a 2013 survey done by Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program, 42.5% of Mapleton respondents were willing to dedicate their time and talent to enhancing the city's transportation. Another 15% were willing to contribute financial support in addition to their time and talent. It is safe to assume this same enthusiasm to advocate on behalf of the town can be translated to this campaign to insist "staycationers" come and spend their money in Mapleton.

Here are some ways the residents can dedicate their time, talent, and financial support to the campaign:

- **Share on social media:** When articles about Mapleton or MapleFest are featured in the local news, be sure to share them.
- **Blog about it:** Create a WordPress blog and open it up to residents who would like to blog. This is a way they can express their visions for the rebuild and recover efforts.
- **Volunteer:** Push up your sleeves during the MapleFest and volunteer to set up and tear down.
- **Buy local:** When the maple syrup becomes available for sale, buy it instead of any other kind of competitive syrup, and give lots of it as gifts.

The local educational community can also get involved! Many aspects of this project and the campaign can offer educational benefits to the community college:

- **Graphic Design:** Create an animation using the Mapleton logo that can be



added to the campaign media kit for use on television ads.

- **Journalism:** Report on MapleFest and the progress of the new projects.
- **Business:** Determine the critical success factors for a country store to determine if one should be established, calculate the revenue generated by MapleFest, and work with Hy-Vee stores to add Mapleton's syrup to their shelves. An entrepreneur should represent Mapleton by attending events and seminars coordinated by Startup Sioux City. This professional organization, consisting of local and regional entrepreneurs, was established in 2012 in efforts to "get all startups on the same page – sharing information about events, funding, education sessions, and local, state and regional resources" (Ritchie 2012).
- **Agriculture:** Lead the best practices for the different mechanisms for tree tapping, the proper ways to collect sap, and the process of boiling down.
- **Culinary:** Create the recipe for the signature Mapleton food item that uses maple syrup. The best product will include these traits:
 - Ingredients that are part of the "clean eating" movement
 - High mobility factor (can eat on the go)
 - Kid-friendly (picky, messy eaters)
 - Indulgent but not unhealthy



Note: If the community college doesn't have any programs in these fields, certainly some board members have experience in these areas.

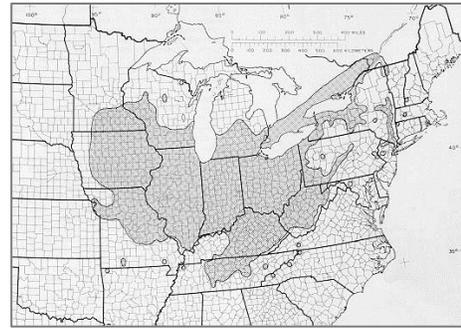
This concludes the strategic communication portion of this letter. The following page covers some prospective logistics relevant to maple trees, sap, and syrup that the board may consider should the members accept this proposal. There is a famous quote, "through adversity comes strength," and I am confident this project and campaign can aid the rebuild and recovery efforts to make Mapleton stronger than ever.

Logistics

A plan for making Mapleton a hot spot for maple syrup commerce

- **SOURCE THE SAP.** According to the USDA Forest Service, the majority of maples closest to Mapleton grow in central and eastern Iowa, as well as southern

Minnesota. Mapleton could source sap, construct a “sugar shack” – where boiling of the sap occurs - in the town, and bottle its own maple syrup.



- **SOURCE THE SYRUP.** In my research, I found two maple syrup operations within 90 miles of Mapleton, both in Iowa. According to a 2012 USDA report, one is in the county of Woodbury, but its exact whereabouts are not easily searchable. The second is in Everly, a little less than 2 hours north of Mapleton, owned by Michael and Darla Eeten. The big question there is whether or not any operations would be willing to sell enough syrup for Mapleton’s needs. It takes 40 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of syrup, and they may not have enough trees on their land or enough capacity in their boiling and bottling process to support that.



- **GROW IN MAPLETON.** Depending if the land directly nearby Mapleton is privately owned or publically owned, this board may be able to coordinate an orchard of sugar maple trees. If the land is publically owned, students in the community college or volunteers may be able to plan the set-up, plant, harvest, and production of the final product. If the land is privately owned, a farmer or home-owner (or several of them) may be willing to put an orchard and a “sugar shack” on their land but would need to agree to visitors on their property during any touring hours. A major road block to either of these options, however, is that a sugar maple does not produce enough sap to be tapped for syrup production until it is at least 40 years of age.



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Strategic Communication Consulting

14330 West 116th Street

Apartment 2420

Olathe, Kansas 66062

Research Paper

Introduction

In this research paper, I will:

- State the problem facing the town of Mapleton, IA as well as that facing the populations nearby
- Investigate the “who, what and where” of my campaign’s messages using demographics and psychographics
- Analyze key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the campaign I am formulating

Problem Statement

Mapleton needs to position itself as a great place to visit, and residents of neighboring counties, metropolitan cities, and college towns are on the lookout for experiences in their own backyards of high value and low cost.

Demographics

	Omaha	Compared to State of NE	Sioux City	Des Moines	Monona County	Compared to State of IA
Population	434,000	N/A	82,000	207,000	8,996	N/A
Race						
White	71.1%	-15%	80.6%	76.4%	97.0%	-12%; -16%; +5%
Black	13.7%	+67%	2.9%	10.2%	0.5%	-- ; +72%; -85%
Hispanic	13.1%	+30%	16.4%	12.0%	2.0%	+70%; +58%; -64%
2+ races	3.0%	+27%	3.7%	3.4%	1.0%	+51%; +47%; -41%
Language other than English spoken at home	15.3%	+32%	17.7%	17.2%	2.6%	+59%; +58%; -64%
Age						
Persons under 5 years	7.5%	--	8.1%	7.9%	5.1%	+19%; +16%; -19%
Persons under 18 years	25.1%	--	26.6%	24.8%	21.4%	+11%; +4%; -9%
Persons over 65 years	11.4%	-16%	12.4%	11.0%	24.6%	-17%; -26%; +36%
Gender						
Percent Female	50.8%	N/A	50.8%	51.1%	50.6%	N/A
Income						
Median Household Income	\$48,052	-7%	\$43,449	\$45,836	\$42,025	-16%; -12%; -19%
Education						
High school diploma	87.9%	-3%	83.7%	87.1%	89.7%	-8%; -4%; -1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	33.1%	+14%	19.1%	24.7%	14.3%	-26%; -4%; -44%

Source: QuickFacts.Census.gov

Note: " -- " means no variation/difference

(Deduced data) Persons age 18-64: Omaha 65.3%, Sioux City 52.9%, Des Moines 56.3%, Monona County: 51.1%

Important Note: Something that my primary and secondary target markets have in common is they make less money than others on average in their state, and they are less educated

Primary target market

Families in neighboring metropolitan areas

My campaign will target families with one or both parents who work full time and have an annual income in the mid- to high-\$40,000s per household. However, this primary target market (subsets A & B) is only age 28-38, so they are not quite at their peak earning potential. That means they are looking for weekend day-trips that hold a lot of value for creating lasting family memories. Their slogan is, "It's not quantity, it's quality." They enjoy spending time with their extended family on weekends and holidays going to the kids' birthday parties, baseball tournaments, dance recitals, and local family-friendly festivals that celebrate culture, cuisine, or local businesses. At events like these, the family can spend about \$50 by the time food, kids' activities, and souvenirs are said and done. However, the parents see this as a value because they believe in meaningful experiences in their own backyard. They have 2-3 children anywhere between the ages of 6 months and 13 years.

Subset A: Omaha, NE

Who In Omaha, a more significant majority of the population, compared to the other target markets, is 19-64 years of age. They are more diverse and more highly educated, but do not have as much of a household income as the rest of Nebraskans. However, their income is still higher than that of Iowans, on average. The trend line of interracial marriage is on the rise among all racial groups in the US (Jagesic 2014) and Omaha has a 67% higher Black population compared to the rest of the state and the lowest White population of all metropolitan cities I am targeting.



What To appeal to this subset, I will tailor my advertising to include mixed race Black & White families.

Where Local publications, like the Omaha World-Herald (Omaha.com) have published articles describing the trend in interracial marriages as recently as June of 2015, so this may be a medium that this particular subset of my campaign's target market goes to for news and information. Another great source this group may frequent is the New York Times *Motherlode* blog, with new posts every day – some even commenting on the trend in interracial parenting (Cheng 2015). These authors are potentially their opinion

leaders – people who they can identify with and can advise them on how to parent a child that may not identify as the same race or ethnicity.

Subset B: Sioux City and Des Moines, IA

Who Of all the target markets of my campaign, Sioux City and Des Moines have the highest amount of people under the age of 5, the highest Hispanic/Latino populations, and the lowest amount of high school diplomas. Des Moines has lowest amount of people over the age of 65. These populations make 12-16% less money than the rest of Iowans. These central and northwestern Iowa metropolitan cities constitute big areas of opportunity for my campaign because the data shows there are lots of young families looking for budget-friendly ways to make family memories.

What To appeal to this subset, my campaign's messaging will contain visuals of families of Hispanic/Latino descent. I will also tailor and place one out of every five of my advertising pieces to fit the consumption habits of bilingual audiences.

Where In my Situational Analysis, I will need to explore how young parents who are bilingual get their information, particularly if they prefer to read news or post to social media in English or in Spanish, and which modes of media they consume most often: television, radio, websites, etc. Furthermore, any aspect of the campaign that takes physical form in Mapleton, such as signage, product packaging, etc. should be in English and Spanish. I can accomplish this with no translation cost or extra time allocated because I am fluent in Spanish.

Goal To convince 25% of residents ages 28-38 in neighboring metropolitan cities (subsets A & B) within the next two years that Mapleton offers good value for budget-friendly, family-friendly memory making experiences.



Facebook.com > Luis Duran

Here's the math on potential amounts of people this campaign could attract to Mapleton ("response rate") using Omaha as an example.

46 year age range (age 19-64) is 65.3% of the population in Omaha

10 year range is X% of that population

$$\begin{array}{r}
 46 \\
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 65.3\% \quad X
 \end{array}
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 65.3\% \times 10 = 46X \quad
 6.53 = 46X \quad
 46 \div 6.53 = 7 \quad
 X = 7$$

If a 46 year age range is 65.3% of the population, then a 10 year age range within that is an estimated 7% of the population. I'm targeting this 7% of the population. A realistic goal for response rate is 25%. To find that number of people, here is the simple math: 7% of 434,000 is 30,380. 25% of 30,380 is 7,595. I can realistically expect to attract 7,595 people to Mapleton from Omaha. That's not counting their children, but rather focusing on the decision-making, money-spending parents.

For Sioux City, x=8.69. 8.69% of 82,000 is 7,125. 25% of 7,125 is 1,781.

For Des Moines, x=5.63. 5.63% of 207,000 is 11,654. 25% of 11,654 is 2,913.

<p><i>Total: 12,289</i></p> <p><i>estimated response rate</i></p>

Secondary target market

Retirees in neighboring counties in rural Iowa

My campaign will also target the senior citizen population in the surrounding area who would like to be a part of Mapleton's rebuilding and recovering. This target market is no longer working full time and is on the lower end of the average \$42,025 annual income of Monona County. They are looking for life experiences that fit their motto, "Give a little, get a lot."

Who In Monona County, where Mapleton is located, 97 out of every 100 people are White. Also, 1 out of every 4 people is over the age of 65, which is 36% more than other areas in the state. Many people in this area did not go to college, and their income is the lowest of all my campaign's other target markets.



http://www.gannett-cdn.com

What Because Mapleton is right out their back door, the message will not need to be as persuasive as it will need to be for the primary target audience. Rather, the message will need to be informational in tone: “If you come see what Mapleton has to offer after the tornado, then you will be contributing to the rebuild and recover effort.”

Where I must learn more about the psychographics of this target market. To do so, I have devised a survey. It is attached. The professor has graciously offered to find respondents for this survey. I will analyze responses in the Situational Analysis paper.

Goal To inform 25% of retirees ages 65+ in neighboring rural counties that they will be contributing to the rebuild and recover of Mapleton if they visit the town within the next two years. (Note: This goal statement may be modified based on responses on questions #1 and #2 on the survey.)

The population in Monona County over the age of 65 is 24.6%. 24.6% of 8,996 is 2,213. If this campaign attracts 25% of that population to Mapleton, that would be 553 people. Monona County shares borders with 6 other counties, so assuming they mirror Monona County’s census data, I can multiply by 7, and that number would be 3,871.

<i>Total: 3,871</i>

estimated response rate

Tertiary target market

Students at nearby colleges & universities

Who The local colleges and universities I am going to target are an hour and a half or less away from Mapleton. Because the student population of the six schools totals 28,500, it surpasses that of Iowa State University in Ames. Therefore, this campaign will not put all its eggs in one basket, but rather spread the wealth among students to the north and to the south of Mapleton. There is a difference in interests of this group due to the variety of areas of study offered by the schools. I would not say they have a common mantra; rather, their values lie in socially-, environmentally-, and economically-friendly cogs in the machine of society. With how connected they are, the right message framed around those values can prod their battle cry on loads of social media we in the industry may not have even seen used for local movements yet.

What I will appeal to this target market by constructing my campaign’s messaging around local natural resources and socio-economic factors. Visuals and copy will emphasize the difference between the sugars in maple syrup compared to those in high fructose corn syrup, which is the main ingredient in the most popular brands of “pancake syrup” on store shelves.

The messaging will position Mapleton to be the place to go for those with working knowledge of how consuming locally-made products contributes positively to the well-being of their regional economy.

Where To reach this target market, my campaign messages will appear solely in social media. Specifically, I the campaign’s communication tactics will be funneled through the student journalism organizations that own and operate the pages that report out on campus news. More details on this approach are covered in the social media strategy I outline later.



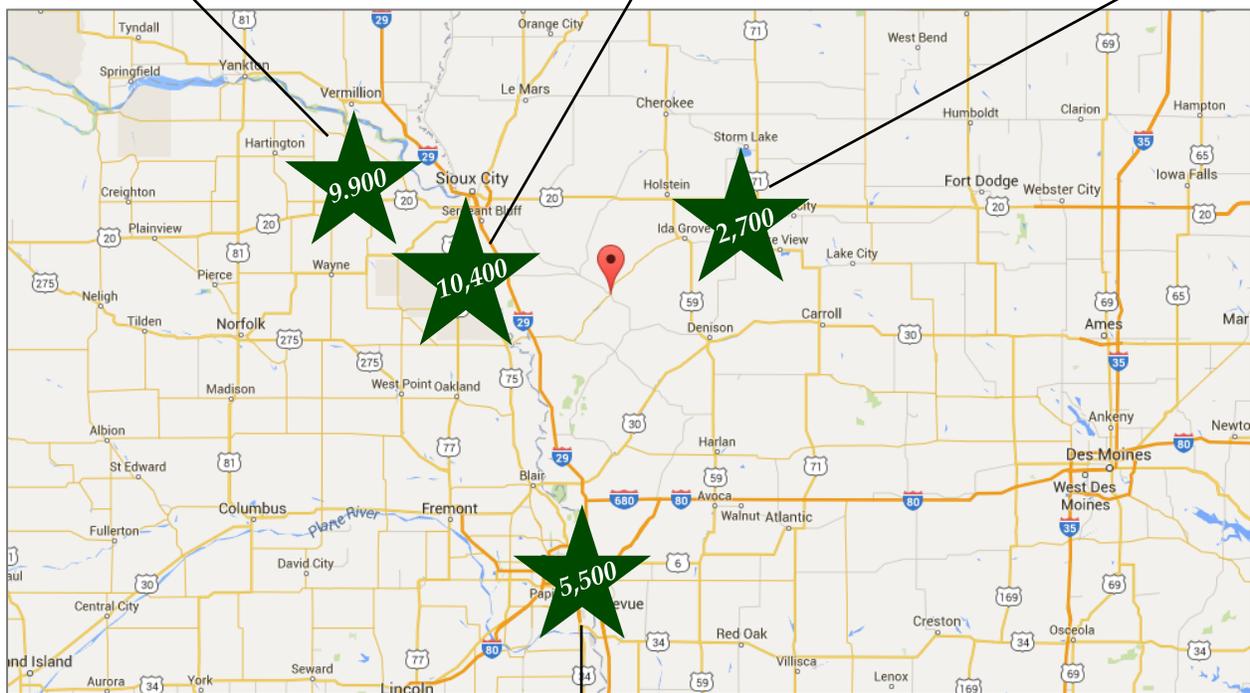
Morningside.edu/videos

Goal To persuade 25% of students at nearby colleges and universities that it is in their best interest to see what Mapleton has to offer within the next two years.

Briar Cliff, Morningside, Western Iowa Tech

University of South Dakota (USD)

Buena Vista University (BVU)



Iowa Western Community College (IWCC)

Total: 28,500

÷ 25%

7,125

estimated response rate

Although this target market has the potential produce a higher response rate than my secondary target market, I am cautiously optimistic as to the validity of the estimation for the following reasons:

- 1) college students may have limited modes of transportation to get to Mapleton
- 2) college students may rank experiences such as those that Mapleton can provide lower on their priority list as a lifestyle choice at their age
- 3) the social media-only aspect of reaching this target market can either have huge payoffs or almost no payoffs because social media marketing is an emerging art about which I have much to learn

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Mapleton R&R Board has a track record of working with state university grad students to improve their community

Weaknesses

Is Mapleton R&R Board willing, connected enough to accomplish all action items in certain aspects of campaign?

Opportunities

Staycations are of good value in this economy if experience can outmeasure cost, time, & energy spent by patrons

Threats

Infrastructure: Iowa highways around Mapleton are not direct enough of a route
Economy: Audience does not have enough money to travel to Mapleton

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Catherine Clark

Strategic Communication Consulting

14330 West 116th Street

Apartment 2420

Olathe, Kansas 66062

Situation Analysis

Introduction

This paper is an analysis of the *who, what, where, and why* of Mapleton, Iowa and its current product, market, competition, and more. All throughout, I describe insights on the most essential aspects of my client's status in these areas and create launching points for my campaign based on them.

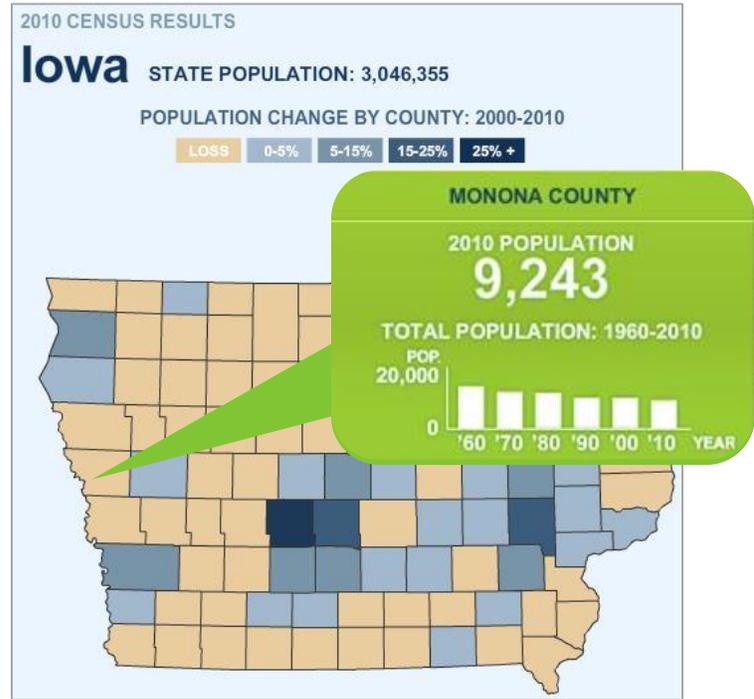
The industry

Mapleton is one of many small towns across the gorgeous landscape of the state of Iowa. Although many outsiders may associate the words "complacency" and even "mythical" with such towns (Publishers Weekly), those with their eyes open enough to see today's small towns for what they can be are the visionaries. Country singer Justin Moore cites ease of living and simple pleasures in his 2009 hit country song, "Small Town USA," with lyrics such as, "Give me a Saturday night my baby by my side, a little Hank Jr. and a six pack of light". In fact, viewers may see a Travellowa ad prior to watching the music video on YouTube. [The ad](#) features Napoleon Bonaparte traveling modern Iowa regretting his decision to sell it way back when. He feels this way because there is so much to see and do, both in the city and the country. Modern living has folks flocking to the city for work, but they also seek solace on the outskirts of town for down-home fun in places like Spencer and Le Mars with populations around 10,000. Why shouldn't Mapleton be one of those places? The town has risen from the ashes of a 2011 tornado by rebuilding and recovering, and now it is time to rebrand Mapleton to be a major destination here in Small Town USA.



The company

Mapleton can proudly consider itself on the list of rural towns with an amazing potential. While population has steadily been decreasing since the 1960s, those who remain show a dedication to the well-being of their town. For example, when a tornado swept through the town square in 2011, a Rebuild and Recovery Board was established to address the destruction. Those who comprised the Board, such as former elected officials and businesspeople, saw the plan through to recreate an aesthetically pleasing town square that was also functional, as it addressed a runoff issue caused by trees that were ripped out of the ground by the terrible weather event. The city of Mapleton is prepped for the next big turn of the tide: the rebranding of its very identity as to drive outsiders to this town for the benefit of its economy.



The consumer

Compared to the rest of Iowa, Mapleton has 36% more people over the age of 65 and a 19% lower median household income. My campaign will have a reach several miles outside of Monona County to not only put Mapleton on the map, but drive business to the town. Those who will want to venture here will be: young families from neighboring metropolitan areas, college students from nearby campuses, and retirees who know their way around the beautiful Monona County.

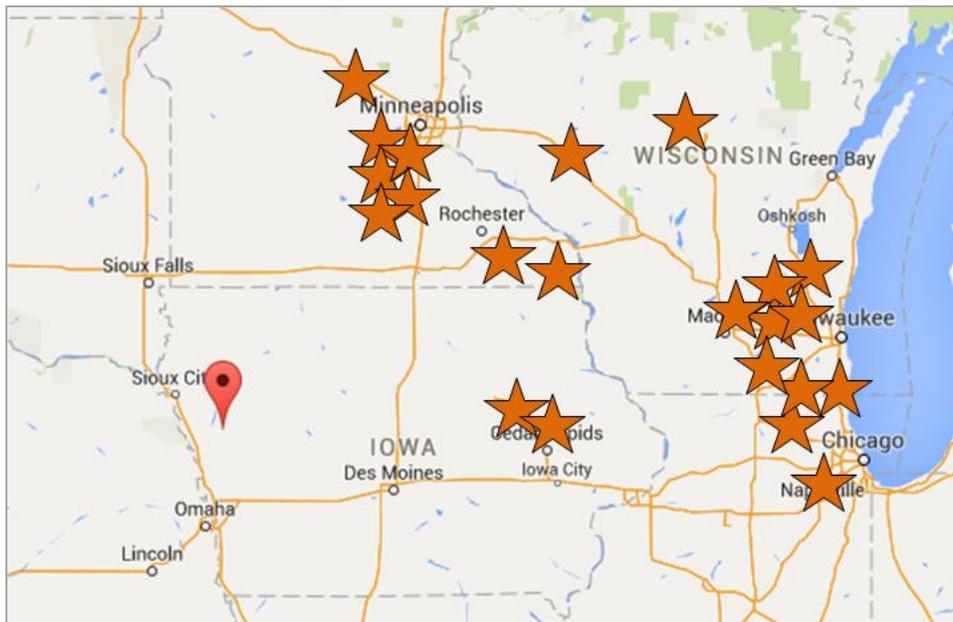
The product

As part of the rebuild and recover Mapleton mission, Iowa State University graduate students with expertise in urban development reconstructed the West Side Park. It offers exceptional green space with easy access to a trail. The trail is also undergoing reconstruction, about which I provide details in the Budget section in this paper. The park will serve as the hub when my campaign draws business to Mapleton.



The market

There are over twenty maple syrup festivals in the northern Midwest, with two of them in eastern Iowa. The majority of the festivals occur in or near Minneapolis, Milwaukee, and Chicago. Maple trees release their sap when daytime temperatures reach the 50s and nighttime temperatures hover around the freezing point. Therefore, syrup is the freshest in the early spring. This explains why all the maple syrup festivals take place between the first weekend in March and the last weekend in April. Nature centers and conservatories are the most common venues to hold maple syrup festivals, with activities such as guided tours of the sap-to-syrup process, pancake breakfasts, tree tapping demonstrations, and live country or bluegrass music. My campaign will bring the festival atmosphere to the town square of Mapleton as the weather is just warming up. Preferably, it will be held on a mid- to late-April afternoon with high temperatures in the mid- to upper 50s. The experience will be comprised of live music, Iowa craft beer, wine from local vineyards, children's activities, syrup making demonstrations/tours, and more!



The competition

Researching annual events that take place in my target market in the month of April is especially important because this is my competition. Depending on the dates and target markets of these events, I have carefully analyzed if my festival could afford to overlap with these events.

- **1st weekend in April:** Rock'n Bac'n Brew'n festival at the Clay County Fairgrounds in Spencer, IA, about two hours north of Mapleton. Communities in the Lakes Corridor Region started this annual event last year with the goal of helping local businesses prosper economically. The venue is indoors, and it appears to be for ages 21+ only. Because Spencer and Mapleton share a target market of Sioux City, the dates of our

events will not conflict. My campaign will encourage the Maple Valley Development, Inc. (MVDI) group to learn from the Lakes Corridor Region group in order to mirror their best practices in event management to put together the outdoor, family-friendly MapleFest. (For more information on MVDI, refer to the Previous Promotion section.)

Note: This festival costs \$20-\$45 to attend, so depending on budgeting for my festival, I may want to consider charging for entry.

- **2nd weekend in April:** Le Mars Spring Fever Antique Fair at the Le Mars Convention Center, just 30-40 minutes north of Sioux City and about an hour north of Mapleton. This event has the same target market as my event as far as geography, but not age. Because two out of three of my main target markets would most likely not go to an antique fair, it is fine to overlap dates with this event.
- **3rd weekend in April:** 66th Annual Abu-Bekr Shrine Circus at the Sioux City Tyson Events Center. This event has press support because it appears in the [Sioux City Journal](#) and the [Cherokee Chronicle Times](#). My event will not take place on the same weekend as this circus because this event is a major attraction for the young families in one of my primary target markets. Not to mention, this may already be a tradition for many families in the Sioux City area.
- **4th weekend in April:** Bluegrass Goes Pink festival in Red Oak Iowa, just southeast of Omaha. The Bluegrass Association of Iowa started this family-friendly annual festival in 2014. Since Omaha is one of my target markets, the dates of MapleFest will not conflict with those of the bluegrass festival. My campaign will encourage the Maple Valley Development, Inc. group to coordinate with the Bluegrass Association of Iowa for musical entertainment to take place at MapleFest.
Note: This festival also costs money to attend: \$5-\$40.
- **5th weekend in April (2016 only):** Alan Jackson in concert at the Sioux City Tyson Events Center. It is very important that the planners of MapleFest keep an eye on which acts are performing at the Tyson Events Center and not overlap dates.

When planning the annual MapleFest, the dates of these competing events in the area should be the first things taken into consideration. It is important to note that these events do not always occur on the weekends listed, so MapleFest needs to be flexible on its dates as to not overlap with them. If I were to choose a weekend in 2016 for the event to occur, it would have been the second weekend in April.

Previous Promotion

The city's website, [Mapleton.com](#), is owned by the Maple Valley Development Inc., which is a non-profit corporation staffed by volunteers. Its purpose is to further the economic development of the Mapleton area by developing funding, plans and programs. The website was created by PPP Design out of Denison, Iowa. The website design company's online portfolio shows that its main customers are local churches, sporting teams, inns, restaurants, and livestock auctions. One page created by PPP Design, [HillsideGrille.com](#), lacks sophistication because there are duplicate sections showing buttons to "Like" the company's

Facebook page. It is my evaluation that this designer does not understand the best methods for utilizing web page real estate because there are sections of pages left blank. Even on the site with the best design, BoulderInnsAndSuites.com, the section showing awards has blank space, causing the eye to stop there. This can cause the site viewer to wonder why the inn hasn't received more awards than the one shown and/or to stop reading just before the e-mail signup section just below that – an important field to the client, I'm sure. In my strategic communication campaign, I will not change website design companies, but I will work closely with the company to completely redesign Mapleton.com. I will ensure the largest improvements in the areas of: aesthetics, functionality, and user-friendliness. Some websites that demonstrate the future look and feel I will be going for include:

- WillametteWines.com
- OutdoorNebraska.gov
- Travellowa.com

Additionally, content will be added for other attractions in the area, such as the local round barn and the Loess Hills Lavender Farm. This will further influence “staycationers” to visit the area because there is more than one attraction. The main goal of the website will be to drive out-of-towners to Mapleton.

Web Interconnectivity

Other than the website, I could not find any previous promotion done by the city of Mapleton. Other cities and towns in the area promote through Travellowa.com. Clicking through and searching that website, I was not directed towards Mapleton. The closest I could get was the Smithland Conservation Center, just eight miles northwest of town and Timber Ridge Winery & Vineyard, just nine miles southwest. In my campaign, I will work with the Travellowa page designers to get Mapleton on that map. I will also work with the Mapleton.com designer to import this interactive map into a “Plan My Trip” feature on Mapleton’s site.

Press

Mapleton shows up in local and regional publications, but the articles do not drive residents to Mapleton. The articles include young athletes from the town who play in all-star games, the ambulance and fire departments that call on the Sioux City area, and the Methodist Church that opened a neighboring home to those who need a place to stay in an emergency. In my campaign, I will create and distribute a press kit to the newspapers, television, and radio in my target markets and invite journalists to MapleFest to report out on the festivities with the goal of driving out-of-towners to Mapleton.

Special Events

The town of Mapleton has been a location where an Iowa nonprofit organization, Trees Forever, has held seminars. In May 2015, the seminar “[Stewards of the Beautiful Land – Monona County](#)” took place on a Monday from 6:00-9:00 PM. Representatives from Trees Forever provided in-class instruction on identifying native plants and their uses, accompanied by outdoor activities using the plants. Part of the rebuilding efforts from 2011 to 2015 included a new gazebo and Roadside Park which features these native plants. The Mapleton Rebuild &

Recover Board states this element, in particular has addressed the issue of water runoff through the community which was a result of the loss of 1,500 trees in the 2011 tornado. These efforts to obtain volunteers to rebuild and maintain the main square of the town pique a niche interest in local residents – that of horticulture. My campaign will leverage the new beauty of the Roadside Park and pique a much more widespread interest in target markets outside of Monona County – that of a family-friendly festival atmosphere, centered in Mapleton.

Previous Budget

The Mapleton Rebuild & Recover Board has received just over \$1.7 million through grants and funding sources as well as dollar matching. There are three main projects currently in progress:

- Iowa Living Roadways is funding the roadside park and work on Highway 141
- Resource Enhancement & Protection is funding the Carhart Trail Project, which is a trail that will be built on the Maple River on the west side of Mapleton
- Wellmark Grants is funding a Healthy Living Design, which is a plan to address walkability issues in town by connecting the public swimming pool to the city park to the ball fields

I estimate that these three projects provided three-fourths of the grant money, therefore earmarking 75% of the total dollars. My math leads me to estimate that my campaign could have a budget of around \$440,000. In my PR paper and final presentation with the advertising plan, I will go into further detail of how I would spend this money.

Conclusion

This analysis has given me new insights into what Mapleton has to offer right now. I understand western Iowa to be an environment that supports festivals and family-friendly activities, both in the city and the country. I believe Mapleton is poised to provide an experience that fits within that scene with the end goal of driving local tourism and commerce to the town. I now have an excellent launching pad from which to start my campaign. Just as Napoleon probably regrets his decision to sell Iowa way back when, I don't want my target markets to miss out on what Small Town USA, specifically Mapleton, has to offer. Certainly they would regret it.

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Catherine Clark

Strategic Communication Consulting

14330 West 116th Street

Apartment 2420

Olathe, Kansas 66062

Social Media Paper

Introduction

Social media is the biggest anomaly in word of mouth advertising the world of marketing has ever seen. According to Keller (2007), of those who hear about something through online word of mouth, 50% are likely to:

- Make a purchase decision based on that information
- Share that information with others

College students are a key target market of my campaign. This group is on social media more than any other target market of the campaign (Arens et al, 2013). What's more, the purchasing behaviors of this age group are even more likely to hinge on online word of mouth compared to other age groups (Wallace, 2009).

Where are these college students located online? The ebb and flow of social media sites is uneasy and sometimes volatile, as demonstrated in the climax and decline of MySpace. Less than one year ago, researchers Carlson & Lee (2015) surveyed a small midwestern university to find the five social media platforms most relevant to the students. The platforms, in order of importance, were: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and tying for fifth place were GooglePlus and Pinterest. The results of this survey are highly applicable to the institutions I am targeting because they are similar in size of student population and geographic location. This social media marketing component of my campaign will focus on the top three platforms.

What is the pebble that begins the ripple in the river of this online word of mouth? Opinion-leaders have traditionally been a small, elite, highly connected group. Now, anyone with an opinion and the ability to click a *post* button has the potential to influence a large amount of people (Smith et al, 2007). This campaign will leverage the publications produced by the Journalism & Mass Communication programs at the local community colleges and universities. The students in these programs have the inside track on the media consumption habits of students on their campuses, whether it is campus radio, television, newspaper, or social media. You may ask, "If the main way you will reach college students is through social media, then why are we talking about campus newspapers and television?" In these fast-

evolving times, where the average Gen Z-er¹ has his or her smart phone permanently attached to his or her palm, television stations, such as Iowa Western Community College's CBTV-17, have developed pages on a handful of social media sites in order to survive. In the case of Buena Vista University's *The Tack*, posts on social media clearly drive traffic back to the newspaper's website, on which the articles are originally posted. The same strategic methodology is being applied to the publications' YouTube channels with the video medium. Promoting this campaign will be mutually beneficial to the students managing the publications as well as the city of Mapleton. The students will gain real-world knowledge of the Public Relations and advertising that goes into a strategic communication campaign and Mapleton will become a household name on several local campuses. The tactics I plan to use in the social media marketing portion of my campaign comprise the remainder of the information below.

Goal

To persuade 25% of local college students that it is in their best interest to see what Mapleton has to offer within the next two years.

**It will be up to the student organizations/publications this campaign works with to post promotional content to their pages and websites to gain the attention of followers at their institutions.*

Colleges & Program Partners

Iowa Western Community College (IWCC)

Council Bluffs, IA



The Media Studies program at IWCC has its own cable television station, CBTV-17, which also maintains pages on the three most popular social media sites among college students, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Popular hashtags among students at IWCC:

- [#Reivers](#)
- [#GoReivers](#)
- [#ReiverFever](#)

Reiver Beat is a group of social media pages that appears to be affiliated with CBTV-17, and content on the pages is dedicated to sharing the activities of the student body.

¹ Those born in the early 2000s through the 2010s.



When a student tweets out a fun activity or a win at a big match for the school, they use these hashtags, named after their mascot. It's a way to show school spirit. I can see a student searching these tweets frequently to see what's going on around them, or what their classmates are up to.

Buena Vista University (BVU)

Storm Lake, IA

According to the website of the 100 year old student newspaper, *The Tack*, the student publication was "named the 2013 Iowa College Media Association Multimedia Organization of the Year and awarded 2nd in the nation in 2012-13 for best Online News Website by the Society for Collegiate Journalists". The Tack maintains pages on two of the three most popular social media sites, Facebook and Twitter.



Popular hashtags *The Tack* writers use to reach their readership are:

- [#BVU](#)
- [#StormLake](#)

Here is an example of a sensibly written tweet that the campaign would ask *The Tack* to post using their Twitter handle:



Since there is no character limit on Facebook, that post could utilize even more persuasive wording techniques to appeal to this market.

Hey, #BVU! Take a break from #StormLake and get to the #firstannual #MapleFest! One hour south with a #PhotoOp #PitStop at the Ida Grove castles, it will be a #weekendtoremember in #smalltownUSA.

[attach JPEG of event flyer or logo]

University of South Dakota (USD)

Vermillion, SD

The USD student newspaper, *The Volante*, doesn't participate in hash tagging, so posts should contain more detail, as shown below. Something unique about *The Volante* is it has its very own app for mobile devices. Therefore, advertising space on the app will be a route that I will advise taking as well to increase effectiveness.



The Volante
March 11 at 3:02pm · 🌐

Hey Coyotes! Have you heard about the new MapleFest going on the last two weekends in April? A great spring time drive down the Missouri River, Mapleton holds lots of small town charm in store!

There are loads of things to do at MapleFest! Check out the list of activities below.

- **Sugar shack:** Spend some time learning how sap goes from the tree to the table as maple syrup. Did you know it takes about 40 gallons of sap just to make one gallon of syrup?
- **Children's play area:** Set the kids free on bounce houses, farm made slides, duck races, and more!
- **Country store:** Buy souvenir t-shirts, maple syrup, and Mapleton's signature food item made out of maple syrup.
- **Gift shops:** Wonder down Main Street and step into fun shops & boutiques, such as Gift Gallery, just to name one.
- **Craft corner:** Create your customized picture frame with the wonderful folks from Works of Heart.
- **Vendor booths:** Sample or buy many things rural northwest Iowa has to offer. Sip a taste of wine from Old Town Vineyard & Winery out of Ida Grove or rub on a sample of skin care products from Loess Hills Lavender Farm out of Missouri Valley.
- **Onsite food:** The Rotary Club of Mapleton, IA will be serving up great American hometown dishes courtesy of Beef & Brew Café.
- **Town square:** Take a stroll through the newly rebuilt town square and see the success Mapleton has had rebuilding after a tornado ripped through in 2011.

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

The campaign will apply these same social media marketing tactics to the following institutions in Sioux City.

- Western Iowa Tech Community College
- Morningside College
- Briar Cliff University

Conclusion

The social media marketing tactics I have laid out here will be successful in appealing to students at several local colleges and universities. Each campus has a unique medium for conducting news and information, all of which tie back to the social media platforms most relevant to college students today. The writers at the student publications will be the pebble that begins the ripple of online word of mouth promoting Mapleton to their followers. However, the real opinion leaders will be those who are inspired to take part in what Mapleton has to offer and click that *post* button to “tweet” or “facebook” about their experience. This is the way my campaign will utilize online word of mouth to drive this target market to Mapleton.

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Public Relations

Introduction

The Public Relations portion of my campaign is very important because it is the primary way I will harness the abundance of support from neighboring communities and organizations in charge of economic development. While it is very easy to get caught up in the fun and flashiness of PR, I have maintained a strong connection between my campaign goals and the PR tactics to satisfy those goals. I've listed the goals based on target market on page one and under each new PR tactic, I explain briefly how it ties to one or more of the goals.

Goals

1. Convince 25% of residents ages 28-38 in neighboring metropolitan cities within the next two years that Mapleton offers good value for budget-friendly, family-friendly memory making experiences.
2. Inform 25% of retirees ages 65+ in neighboring rural counties that they will be contributing to the rebuild and recover of Mapleton if they visit the town within the next two years.
3. To persuade 25% of local college students that it is in their best interest to see what Mapleton has to offer within the next two years.

Tactic #1: Packaging

Applicable goal(s): #1-3. The limited edition tin will appeal to collectors of novelty items in all markets.

Just as Fossil has used specialty packaging of their watches as a gift to consumers, I will create a limited edition inaugural season maple syrup tin. Working with the company [TinPak](#), I will specify custom sizing and printing of these tins to fit the syrup bottle plus padding. No pricing is available at this time on the manufacturer's website. They could provide a quote depending if we want embossing, spot glossy added aesthetic features. I would prefer embossing at strategic locations in the photo I choose, such as a maple tree as to bring focus to the festival and the city of Mapleton. I would also like to use glossiness to bring attention to something important in the photo, such as a river or train which have special significance to the people of Mapleton. These tins will be produced at no extra cost to the campaign budget. I'm confident the consumer will be willing to pay the retail price of the tin with maple syrup nestled inside, something which will only be offered at MapleFest.¹



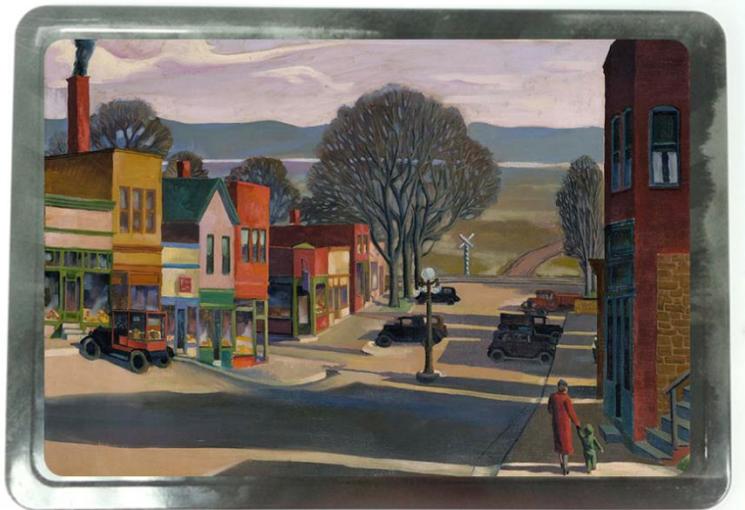
Fossil Watches specialty packaging depicting the novelty behind their brand (Arens et al 2013)

Estimated dimensions:

Height 5"

Width 7"

Depth 2"

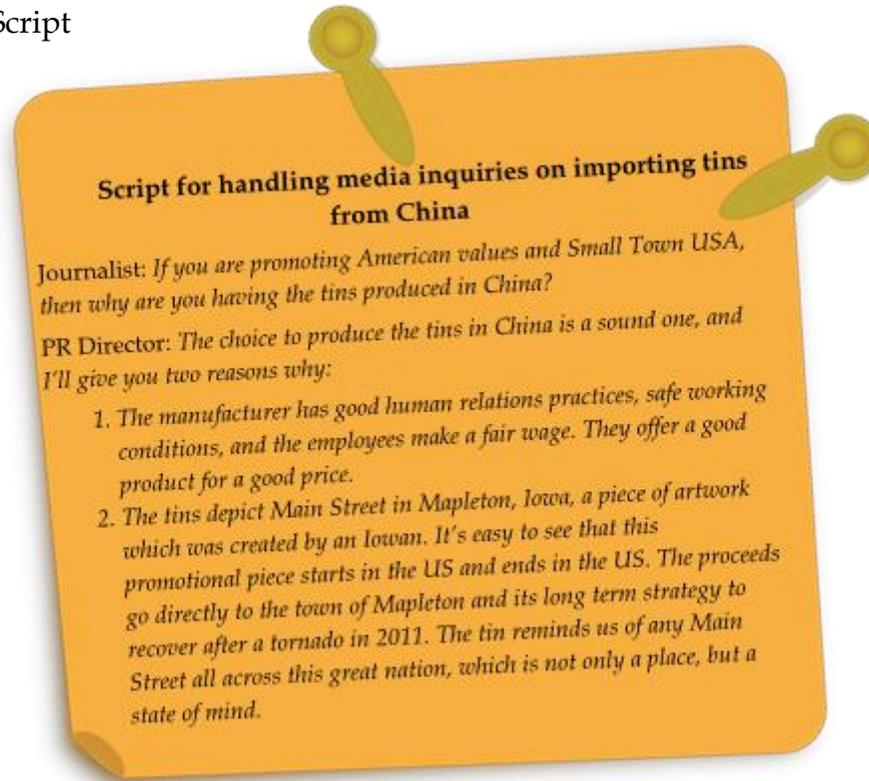


Mock-up: Parkville, Main Street (1933) depicts the town of Parkville, Missouri on the Missouri River. I would actually use an image from the book "Mapleton Iowa The First 125 Years" by Keith Robinson.

¹ Something which could positively affect the pricing of the tins I will import from China is the Trans-Pacific Partnership. It is a piece of legislation that is set to begin implementation in 2016, and it will create an easement on red tape in the trade process between Asian countries and North American countries.

Possible PR Hazard: The manufacturing company is based in China, so I must be able to defend my choice to import the tins. I will confirm the following details before anyone signs a contract: the factory at which these tins are made has good human relations practices, safe working conditions, and pays a fair wage to the employees.

Solution: Script



Tactic #2: Media Kit

Applicable goal(s): #1 & #2. I feel that two out of three of potential customers in my target markets are watching their local news.

The MapleFest media kit will feature the event's electronic bulletin with headline as well as a listing of activities for visitors. I will contact the affiliates of Fox, CBS, NBC, and ABC in the major markets of Omaha, Sioux City, and Des Moines.

Media Kit Item #1: Electronic Bulletin with Headline
(Shown on next page)

Event Colors

- Maple Leaf Green (RGB 0 122 0)
- Lime (RGB 171 229 25)
- White (RGB 255 255 255)



Media Kit Item #2: Activity List

There are loads of things to do at MapleFest! Check out the list of activities below.

- **Sugar shack:** Spend some time learning how sap goes from the tree to the table as maple syrup. Did you know it takes about 40 gallons of sap just to make one gallon of syrup?
- **Children's play area:** Set the kids free on bounce houses, farm made slides, duck races, and more!
- **Country store:** Buy souvenir t-shirts, maple syrup, and Mapleton's signature food item made out of maple syrup.
- **Gift shops:** Wander down Main Street and step into fun shops & boutiques, such as Gift Gallery, just to name one.
- **Craft corner:** Create your customized MapleFest picture frame with the wonderful folks from Works of Heart.
- **Vendor booths:** Sample or buy many things rural northwest Iowa has to offer. Sip a taste of wine from Old Town Vineyard & Winery out of Ida Grove or rub on a sample of skin care products from Loess Hills Lavender Farm out of Missouri Valley.
- **Onsite food:** The Rotary Club of Mapleton, IA will be serving up great American hometown dishes courtesy of Beef & Brew Café.
- **Town square:** Take a stroll through the newly rebuilt town square and see the success Mapleton has had rebuilding after a tornado hit in 2011.

Media Kit Item #3: Contact Sheet

Role	Name	Location	Organization	Phone	E-mail
Event Representative	Marie Whiteing	Mapleton, Iowa	Mapleton Rebuild & Recover Board	(712) 881-1489	whiteing@longlines.com
Event Creator	Cathy Clark	Olathe, Kansas	Graduate Student, University of Iowa	(563) 343-0390	catclark@q.com
Event Executive Director	Michelle Bostinelos	Sioux City, Iowa	Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO)	(712) 224-8902	mbostinelos@simpco.org

Tactic #3: Demonstration

Applicable goal: Same as Tactic #2.

Along with the media kit, I will offer to send a MapleFest representative to appear on-air for a demonstration of Mapleton’s maple syrup as used in a recipe. At the end of the demonstration, the representative will promote the limited-edition Mapleton tin and the channel will promote MapleFest using pieces from the media kit.

BEST GRANOLA EVER



Dry Ingredients

- 1 cup rye flakes
- 1 cup oat flakes
- 1 cup wheat flakes
- 1 cup flaxseed
- 1 cup sliced almonds
- ½ cup unsalted sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup sesame seeds

Coating Ingredients

- ½ cup sucanat sugar
- Pinch sea salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ cup pure maple syrup
- ¼ cup honey

Add-ins (after baking)

- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup dried cranberries

Instructions

Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
 In a large bowl mix all dry ingredients until evenly distributed. Set aside.
 Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, place all coating mixture ingredients.
 Gently warm and stir until sugar is dissolved.
 Pour liquid coating mixture over dry ingredients in the mixing bowl.
 Mix until all ingredients are coated.
 Spread granola onto a large cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.
 Bake 40 minutes, stirring frequently (every 10 minutes).
 Transfer granola to a cooling rack and sprinkle with raisins and cranberries.
 Let cool completely.
 When cool, transfer to an airtight container.



Tactic #4: Live Remote Broadcast

Applicable goal(s): #1 & #2

The radio stations are based in the larger markets but have a reach to the smaller markets. Also, my logic tells me that retirees listen to radio more than potential customers in my other target markets; my survey responses may validate this.

I will reach out to the radio stations in the area that my survey respondents said they tune into most frequently. I will provide them with my media kit and ask them to do a live remote broadcast (“live mic” for short) at the festival, which is where the Disc Jockeys set up their equipment on site and broadcast from the event.

Tactic #5: Contest

Applicable goal(s): #1 & #3

The signature food item will appeal to families and college students (see bullets below). Also, the contest involves college students.

I will create a contest for community colleges in my target markets that have Culinary Arts programs. Students at the two colleges will compete to come up with the winning recipe for the signature MapleFest food item that has maple syrup in the recipe. The winner will receive a trophy and/or ribbon, cost of which will come from the event budget.

The best food item will include these traits:

- High mobility factor (can eat on the go)
- Kid-friendly (picky, messy eaters)
- Indulgent but not unhealthy

Iowa Western Community College
Council Bluffs, IA

Mike Hoppe, Program Chair

Phone: (712) 325-3238

E-mail: mhoppe@iwcc.edu

Western Iowa Tech Community
College

Sioux City, IA

Michael Gasaway

E-mail: mike.gasaway@witcc.edu

Possible PR hazard: Copyrighting and/or compensation for student with winning recipe.

Solution: I will consult people on the Mapleton Rebuild & Recover Board with business and legal expertise about the copyrighting before I coordinate with the

program leads at the colleges. The contestants will sign a waiver declining a legal right to a copyright or compensation for the winning recipe.

Possible PR hazard: Accusation of unfair judging.

Solution: To ensure the judging is fair and impartial, the judges fill out a questionnaire and answer “No” to the following:

- Are you an employee or were you ever a student of Iowa Western Community College or Western Iowa Tech Community College?
- Do you have any family or friends who attend Iowa Western Community College or Western Iowa Tech Community College?
- Are you originally from, or live in, Sioux City or Council Bluffs?

An answer of “No” on all three questions in addition to culinary expertise at the professional level will make someone qualified to be a judge. Contestants will not be able to prove any accusation of unfair judging.

Conclusion

Between a limited edition collectible tin with original artwork, local television and radio personalities, and a contest pitting two colleges against each other, I feel that the PR portion of my campaign will effectively channel the enthusiasm of the customers in the target markets. Success in these areas will be the defining factor in my campaign’s PR strategy.

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