



PATHFINDERS RC&D

FINAL REPORT

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS, SPRING 2025



Abandoned Mine Land Field Day, Oskaloosa, IA

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Executive Summary

This semester, students in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication course Strategic Communication Campaigns conducted research and created actionable brand tactics and strategies for Pathfinders Resource Conservation and Development.

This report contains the culmination of a semester's worth of work, identifying brand successes and weaknesses, defining goals and objectives, creating strategies, and creating tactics and documents for Pathfinders to amplify its brand messaging and community impact. We have templates, examples, and suggestions that will lighten the behind-the-scenes workload so staff can put their energy toward what matters most: conserving natural resources and developing rural Iowa economies to improve quality of life and southeast Iowa communities.

On behalf of my classmates, thank you for being a responsive and respectful client. We gained valuable, lasting experience conducting research and developing brand tactics for your organization. Pathfinders leaves a true positive impact on the communities it serves, and it has been an honor to help with that impact.

Thank you to Ashley Utt, Krista Tedrow, the Pathfinders staff and clients, and the board of directors.

Sincerely,
Abby Feldmann and JMC:4315

Strategic Communication Campaigns

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Spring 2025

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Situation Analysis

Introduction

Pathfinders RC&D (Resource, Conservation, and Development) is a nonprofit organization with a core service area of five rural Iowan counties (Mahaska, Keokuk, Jefferson, Davis, and Van Buren) and 18 secondary service areas. The organization provides services to these local communities through place-making, strategic planning, a small business loan program, fiscal agent services, grant writing, grant administration, and several conservation services (such as water quality and soil health programming). They consider themselves a “connector”; if they cannot help, they will link the request with necessary services elsewhere.

Moving forward, Pathfinders must expand people’s knowledge of both the organization itself and the services they can provide. However, as the organization creates communication strategies, it faces several key threats. RC&Ds have been continually defunded from federal sources, leading to fewer RC&Ds around the state of Iowa. Within the service region, there are declining populations and the brain drain of young professionals. The Pathfinders’ staff contains five full-time employees, overseen by 14 members of the board of directors. All 19 are embedded in the community, which may prove an asset in expanding people’s awareness of Pathfinders.

Core Issue

To guarantee Pathfinders’ long-term survival despite unstable federal funding and diminishing resources for rural populations, Pathfinders must increase awareness of their organization and the services they provide within their service region.

Organizational Analysis

Internal Environment

Pathfinders is a small organization with a staff of only five members, which makes it difficult to effectively manage communications. They do not have a team member responsible for communication, which results in a lack of a strategic communication plan. They rely on word of mouth and visits to their website for all new business. The website includes a lot of relevant information about projects and services, but can be difficult to navigate.

Pathfinders also has a notable lack of social media presence, which is crucial for any organization aiming to reach younger audiences. In the U.S., 72% of all adults use at least one social media platform, and 84% of 18- to 29-year-olds use social media (Social Media Users, 2025). Additionally, for organizations to work with Pathfinders, they must email the organization’s general email. Managed by executive director Ashley Utt, the general email then gets directed to the staff member best suited to help them. This system could become untenable if the number of potential clients increases.

External Environment

Iowa RC&Ds are self-funding, which can lead to instability due to changes in state and federal funding priorities. There were once 16 RC&Ds across all 99 counties in Iowa until the United States Department of Agriculture cut its funding of RC&D programs in fiscal year 2011 (DeWitte, 2012). As of 2025, only eight RC&Ds remain in Iowa (Kraus, 2025). There continues to be uncertainty about future funding as the federal and state governments threaten to halt extraneous spending (Reynolds Press Release, 2025).

Situation Analysis

Pathfinders receives 98% of their funding from grants and contracts, as evidenced by Pathfinders receiving \$400,000 from the federal government, \$63,000 from the state government, and \$27,625 from local donations and foundations in southeastern Iowa in 2024. If funding from the federal and state governments were to stop, Pathfinders would again need to adjust to alternate funding channels.

There is competition from government agencies and other conservation-based nonprofits. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) boasts a similar mission focused on conservation and enhancement of Iowa's natural resources, offering business regulatory assistance and providing grants for rural Iowa towns to boost their economy (Iowa Department of Natural Resources, n.d.). As a government agency, the DNR receives more robust funding from the state and federal government, meaning the organization has the wherewithal to take on more projects during a fiscal year.

Rural population decline also affects Pathfinders' external environment. As the population in southeast Iowa declines in favor of the Des Moines metro, Pathfinders has fewer potential clients and fewer people to benefit from its work. Southeast Iowa saw a -1 to -10% change in population from 2013–2023; Fairfield in particular shrank by 12.4% (Peters, 2024). A declining population harms Pathfinders because there are fewer potential clients and fewer people to reap the benefits of Pathfinders' work. However, in an effort to address this threat, Pathfinders' projects foster a space to live, work, and play in rural Iowa and will encourage population retention.

Key Publics

A major potential audience for Pathfinders is elected officials of southeastern Iowa towns and counties, as they have the power to start a project with Pathfinders. Towns with current projects, such as the town of New Sharon, do not necessarily list those projects or their partnership with Pathfinders on their websites, meaning there is a small chance that other towns will organically discover Pathfinders (Search Results for "Pathfinders" – City of New Sharon, IA, n.d.). Instead, these potential clients must already know about the organization to make a Google search, discover the website, and reach out. By opening a line of communication with relevant city council members through newsletters, promotional videos, and an increased social media presence, Pathfinders can strengthen its influence in these small towns.

The state government is also a major audience. State legislators allocate funding to various NGOs across the state, and reaching out to these legislators to raise awareness about their achievements would make the legislature more likely to continue funding. Especially as funding becomes uncertain, Pathfinders must actively create a relationship with the relevant legislators from senate districts 13 and 44, and house districts 25, 26, 87, and 88 (Plan2Statewide22x34, n.d.). With genuine and honest videos, photos, and interviews from people and towns directly affected by Pathfinders' projects, the legislators will see the value in supporting this organization.

Situation Analysis

Rural communities (such as landowners and farmers) could become Pathfinders' potential clients and biggest advocates. Rural communities represent diverse funding avenues; should Pathfinders create stronger communication channels, more people could seek Pathfinders' services and sign contracts with the organization. By activating more rural community members, they can spread Pathfinders' organizational goals through word of mouth, finding more people in need of Pathfinders' services and guaranteeing continued financial support through clients.

Conclusion

As southeast Iowa towns shrink in population, Pathfinders must establish itself as a resource for these towns to revitalize their economies through partnerships focused on tourism, arts and culture, trail development, and small business growth. Pathfinders has the potential to become a trailblazer in RC&D efforts in Iowa but must first implement a campaign to increase public awareness about the organization. Strategies include brochures, a website update to provide timely and relevant information, an increased social media presence, as well as interviews, photos, and videos highlighting the direct impact that Pathfinders has on rural communities across southeast Iowa.

Primary Research: Board of Directors

Research Questions

- How does the board perceive Pathfinders' work and its benefit to their communities?
- What feedback do board members have on Pathfinders' external communication and community awareness?
- What channels of communication and key messages are most important for communicating with new board members and local elected officials?

Methods

- In-depth interviews with Pathfinders Board of Directors Members from core counties, conducted over Zoom
- Interviews with directors with a range of years of experience on the board, including long-time board members and new board members

Key Findings: Organizational Perception

Highlighting Collaborations. A key challenge is ensuring that the organization's projects and resources are visible to those who benefit from its work. While collaborations with institutions such as the University of Iowa on development projects have been impactful, they lack direct attribution to Pathfinders.

Fostering Connections Across the Organization. Current chair Deke Wood said that the organization needs to get "links on each other's websites so people can find us easier." In addition to these links, strengthening branding efforts such as incorporating the Pathfinders logo will lead to a sense of cohesion across projects.

Strengthening Internal Communication. Each board member defined Pathfinders' mission differently, meaning there is no specific understanding of what Pathfinders does (see the appendices for interview transcripts). This aligns with the board's perception that Pathfinders does not have a clear mission.

Strengthening External Communication. There is a consensus among the board members that organization's activity on digital platforms, particularly Facebook, is beneficial but underutilized. While some initiatives, such as the canoe rental program in Van Buren County, are actively promoted, other key projects lack equal visibility. Board members overall expressed a need for more strategic storytelling and engagement through digital channels to assist Pathfinders' goal to reach a wider audience.

Highlighting Facebook. Shea Greiner, a member of the board of directors, said that the Facebook page "really helped us get our name out there a little bit more," and that it would be beneficial for the Facebook to highlight "stories about the great experiences that everyone has had."

Addressing Key Audiences. Currently, communication efforts do not always differentiate between donors, policymakers and rural community members, resulting in a lack of specificity. Through developing audience specific messaging, Pathfinders could improve engagement and ensure that different stakeholders receive information that is relevant to their specific involvement in the organization.

Primary Research: Board of Directors

Communication Practices

Current communication practices are separated into two groups: internal communication within the board and communication with external partners.

Communication with the Board. The board strongly relies on email to communicate, in addition to quarterly meetings. Overall, there is a consensus among board members that email is an effective method of internal communication. (See Appendices C and D). Due to the nature of the work that the board engages in, email is viewed as an efficient and effective method of communication as it succinctly conveys all the necessary information that each board member needs.

- All board members are volunteers, so they all have full-time jobs outside of their position at Pathfinders. Unlike in-person meetings, email communication allows them to reply at their convenience when they have the time to do so.
- There are challenges to the idea of increased board meetings as they are more difficult to schedule, despite them being a more successful method of educating new board members about who Pathfinders is and what they do. However, meeting less often also leads the board members to “lose some connection.”

Communication with Partners. Board members voiced greater concerns about the effectiveness of Pathfinders' communication with external partners. They currently rely on word of mouth for most of their business. While they have Facebook and Instagram, they are not active on the pages, and they are difficult to find. The lack of communication channels is a prominent issue throughout Southeast Iowa but is especially prevalent in rural counties.

Board members acknowledge this shortcoming and express the desire to extend their outreach to increase their visibility and their ability to assist rural areas and “put more outreach into the outlying counties.”

Similar Organizations

The interviewees had a variety of positions within the board (chair, past chair and member), but none of the interviewees knew of any similar organizations that had a successful communication strategy. Deke Wood, current chair of the board of directors, said that all rural organizations struggle with communication.

However, similar organizations do exist, such as the Iowa DNR or county conservation services. The interviewees not knowing about these organizations showed that everyone is very siloed in their communication efforts. Some of these organizations are reaching out to the same publics (elected officials in southeastern Iowa cities), but because they are not talking to each other, these publics are inundated and overwhelmed with messages.

It is important to know about other organization's communication strategies because awareness of what is succeeding in others can lead to a stronger strategy within Pathfinders. The same is true for strategies that aren't working. Others' strategies can be emulated to create more success for Pathfinders.

Conclusion

Overall, the board has a positive view of the organization and the work that they do for communities. They acknowledge the positive reputation that Pathfinders has created among clients that they already served as well as the positive impact that they have on rural communities as a whole.

Primary Research: Board of Directors

The board lacks clarity on the overall mission of Pathfinders, which creates additional pressure on their communication methods. Pathfinders also lack a digital and social media presence, which the board suggests could be adding an additional strain to their outreach. The board acknowledges that insufficient external communications have led to a lack of public awareness, specifically in rural counties outside of their primary networks. In addition to Pathfinders' lack of communication in rural areas, most board members were unable to name a separate organization that they believed did effectively targeted these areas. This suggests that targeted communication in rural Iowa is an overarching issue, not necessarily a Pathfinders specific issue. However, the board agrees that internal communication throughout the organization is strong. They communicate mostly through email, which allows for timely and succinct interactions.

Primary Research: Pathfinders Clients

Research Questions

- How do Pathfinders' clients describe the value of their collaborations and support?
- What key messages and communication channels do Pathfinders' clients suggest would be effective for reaching new potential clients?

Methods

- A short, anonymous questionnaire about clients' satisfaction with Pathfinders' work, experiences with specific projects, and community priorities was sent to 20 previous clients, with 12 total responses (60% response rate). Responses came from clients with different backgrounds all over Southeast Iowa – from the Juvenile Court Services to the Mahaska County Conservation Board
- Interviews with 5 Pathfinders clients (after an initial invitation being extended to 11 clients in total, resulting in a 50% response rate). These questions addressed client satisfaction, community impact, and experience with similar organizations. Interviews were either conducted over Zoom (n = 4) or email (n = 1)

Key Findings: Client Experience and Satisfaction

Overwhelming Client Support. The survey found Pathfinders' previous clients valued their collaboration with the organization and were willing to share extensive feedback. Most clients were satisfied overall, with satisfaction averaging a 4.62 rating out of 5. Every respondent agreed that Pathfinders helped their community become more vibrant, further cementing Pathfinders' success with achieving their mission through client collaboration.

Understanding Pathfinders' Mission. Economic development and conserving natural resources were of high importance to clients. Economic developments was the top priority (4.85/5 rating) while natural resources was second (4.54/5 rating). When reflecting on Pathfinders' mission, clients shared the following:

- "They take ideas to reality."
- "I have been so impressed by their passion to strengthen local entrepreneurs."

Identifying Strengths. Most clients agreed on Pathfinders' strengths: collaboration, project management, direct communication, and grant writing. When asked what the best part of the collaboration was, clients shared the following:

- "Pathfinders held the funds for [the Youth Community CoDesigners project], and were AMAZING to work with."
- "[Pathfinders] has always been responsive, and we [at an engineering firm] have had good experience with their grant writing success... they have been easy to work with."
- "Pathfinders set the bar for the new grant program, sharing templates and operations with other grant recipients and leading the way for what a program could look like moving forward."

92% of Pathfinders clients said they'd work with the organization again.



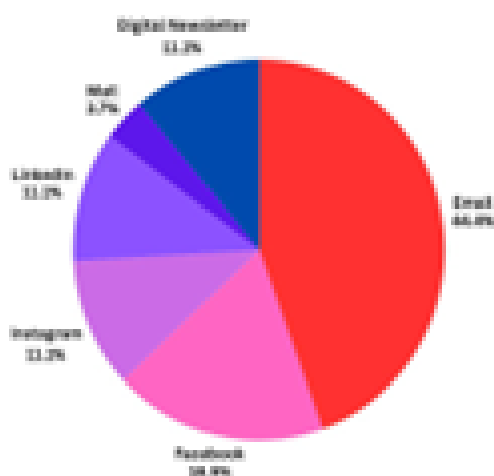
Primary Research: Pathfinders Clients

Communication Channels

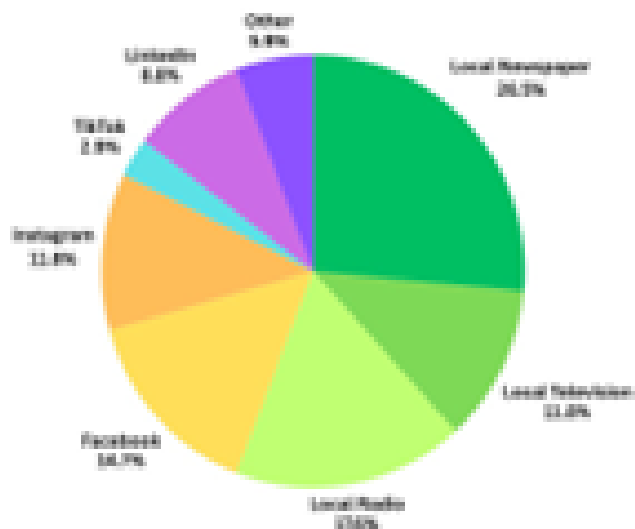
Utilizing traditional forms of communication. Over 50% of respondents said they follow local newspapers, television channels, and radio for news in their community.

Expanding into Digital Forms of Communication. Nearly 75% of respondents said they would open Pathfinders' content via email and social media.

Which messages or posts from Pathfinders would you be most likely to open or pay attention to?



What kind of media do you follow for news about what happens in your community?



Interviews: Client Experience and Satisfaction

Connecting with Pathfinders. All clients heard about Pathfinders through word of mouth from other clients. Tammy Roberts, the community development director of the city Bloomfield, Iowa, highlighted how word-of-mouth traveled due to the success of other communities. She said:

- "When one community in a region does things, it improves the entire region." When the other communities see how successful the town of Bloomfield is, other towns want to be able to achieve the same success to improve their community."

Describing Pathfinders. Clients also describe Pathfinders as being very well-rounded and adaptable. Their goal is to help communities grow no matter what the job is. One client shared:

- "[Pathfinders has] their fingers in almost every aspect of economy or community development, there's a resource there for you, whether it's funding, help putting it all together, help write grants, or direct you to get more resources, Pathfinders does it all."

Conclusion

Many Pathfinders clients can succinctly explain what Pathfinders does and why their work is valuable. Clients are willing and enthusiastic and willing to share their overwhelmingly successful projects in their community. Another part of our research method was having interviews with the clients. Clients explain that Pathfinders invests in community growth – parks, disability accommodation documentation, and tourism – which enables communities to bloom economically and socially. Based on high client satisfaction, Pathfinders is achieving what they set out to do and are cultivating a base of repeat customers.

Primary Research: Pathfinders Clients

The issue lies in pushing out more communication into the community. Those who filled out the survey rely on the newspaper, cable TV, and Facebook. Pathfinders has to find a way to reach new clients through the same means. Word-of-mouth and traditional media are more important in rural communities than social media. Going forward, Pathfinders can focus on traditional tactics like newsletters or brochures and cultivating media relations so Pathfinders projects are frequently featured in local media. Finally, the key message we aim to employ with Pathfinders is that community investment is linked with economic flourishing, which can be shown through previous client testimonials that display the positive impact Pathfinders has had on their communities.

Primary Research: Communication Audit

Research Questions

- What forms of communication (examples being email, Facebook, Instagram) do Pathfinders use to reach their target audience?
- What are the strengths of Pathfinders' current approach to external communication? Where is there room for growth or improvement?
- What tactics from other rural economic development nonprofits or RC&Ds could Pathfinders adopt in their strategic communication?

Methods

- A communication audit of Pathfinders' current and formerly utilized communication channels, including the website, the Facebook page, and Instagram
- A comparison audit that compared Pathfinders to Iowa Valley RC&D. This analysis included the frequency of social media posts, type of content, follower count, and engagement rate; website layout; and news coverage

Key Findings: Communication Audit

Utilizing Former Communication Strategies. Traditional communication tactics such as email are preferred among the clients surveyed and the board of directors. Reviving the email newsletter with a more consistent schedule can update Pathfinders' audience on current projects and upcoming events. In addition, returning to social media and updating the website can increase relations with key publics.

Our findings of current communication strategies concluded that social media is updated infrequently (e.g., last Instagram post was on February 22, 2021) and has limited engagement; a quarterly email newsletter was sent in past years but is no longer active as of spring 2025; and the website needs updating as Krista is not listed on the staff page, and the video presented under the Who We Are tab of Pathfinders is from 2017 and still features Detra Dettman as their old executive director.

Understanding Challenges. With limited staff time and no dedicated staff for communication and marketing, Pathfinders has a lack of capacity, which leads to a limited external communication.

Updating Assets. Visual assets, including photo and video, could more clearly convey the Pathfinders' successful projects, and a brand manual would help ensure font and color use is consistent across communications.

External Communication Audit

Highlighting the Impact of Current Projects. We found that RC&D impact stories substantially increase engagement as opposed to general graphic content. With the variety of ongoing projects Pathfinders has, this could lead to more frequent posts (which also boosts likes and followers).

Utilizing Local News. Iowa Valley RC&D also receives substantial positive news coverage in regional publications such as the Corridor Business Journal. This coverage is essential, as clients surveyed report that they typically find out about relevant events through local media. 9 out of 13 respondents follow local newspapers to discover what is happening in their communities.

Primary Research: Communication Audit

Iowa Valley RC&D Social Media Data	Facebook	Instagram
Avg Posts Per Month	10	13
Number Of Followers	1,200	745
Avg Shares Per Post	1	1
Avg Comments Per Post	<1	<1
Avg Likes Per Post	9	18
Avg Likes Per Post Of RC&D Content	12	23
Avg Likes Per Post of Generic Content	4	11

Pathfinders RC&D Social Media Data	Facebook	Instagram
Avg Posts Per Month	3	0
Number Of Followers	492	68
Avg Shares Per Post	1	0
Avg Comments Per Post	0	0
Avg Likes Per Post	<1	0
Avg Likes Per Post Of RC&D Content	<1	0
Avg Likes Per Post of Generic Content	0	0

Conclusion

Limited capacity for strategic communication makes it challenging for Pathfinders to maintain consistent external communication to reach current stakeholders and potential new collaborators. Client surveys demonstrate the continued relevance of traditional tactics like local news and email, along with legacy social media platforms like Facebook. Review of communication from Iowa Valley RC&D highlights the importance of visual storytelling in audience engagement. A brand guide can ensure a visually consistent look for external communications, and visually appealing videos and photos paired with impact statistics can increase community engagement across platforms. Implementing communication strategies like revitalizing the newsletter, updating video and photographic elements, establishing a content calendar, and having spotlights in local newspapers, will be an essential start to building and enhancing outreach and community knowledge of Pathfinders' successes.

Primary Research: Pathfinders Conservation and Byway Staff

Research Questions

- What are the main communications channels used by conservation and byway staff to connect with potential clients?
- What is the current perception of Pathfinders internal and external communications?
- What is the staff capacity to implement and sustain a communication plan?

Methods

- Interviews with Pathfinders staff: Blake Lough (Abandoned Mine Land Coordinator), Tori Ward (Watershed Coordinator), and Christina Hedstrom (Byway Coordinator). Interviews were either conducted over Zoom (n = 2) or email (n = 1)

Key Findings: Communication Practices

Communicating Through Field Days. Pathfinders conservation programs rely heavily on in-person communication strategies, specifically “field days.” These field days are advertised to the public as ways to learn more about different conservation programs that Pathfinders provides. They often include complimentary meals, guest speakers, and information on how Pathfinders can help in certain conservation areas. Pathfinders’ staff believe these community events are the best avenues to communicate directly with their target publics which include rural farmers and elected officials. During the field days, fliers are the most frequently used marketing strategy.

Utilizing Social Media. Conservation events are also promoted occasionally on Facebook and Instagram pages. The byway, abandoned mine land, and watershed groups function as separate entities, with the byway and watershed organizations having their own Facebook pages. Other current communication channels include video news segments pertaining to Historic Hills Scenic Byway.

Communicating Focus Areas. The staff of Pathfinders work very independently. While they all seem to have a general idea of what other staff do, they lack specific awareness of what other Pathfinders staff are doing. This lack of shared understanding may lead to discrepancies in defining the organization and telling people about what they do and the services they provide. Another point of confusion in Pathfinders’ overall image comes from the diversity of their projects, which could appear unrelated (such as water conservation and abandoned land mine reclamation). Those same projects may be highly technical, making it difficult to communicate to a layperson.

Conclusion

Through the interviews we conducted with Pathfinders’ staff, we found that their current communication strategy consists mostly of word of mouth along with events like their Field Days, with some social media usage by individual staff on dedicated accounts. The diverse array of activities and independent operation of staff make developing general communication plans and strategies challenging.

Research Summary, Publics, and Goals

Research Summary

- People who have worked with Pathfinders (Board of Directors, clients) are very enthusiastic about the organization, staff and its work.
- Pathfinders' work and mission can be harder to describe for those who are newly involved; there is also a lack of awareness about Pathfinders' expertise and potential beyond those currently involved.
- Staff work well independently, but interrelationship of the conservation and economic development projects may not be highlighted.
- Branding and messaging on the web and social media can be inconsistent or out of date. This can be attributed to a lack of communication staff.
- Stories about the impact of current projects are especially engaging for audiences.
- Traditional strategic communication tactics, like brochures, features in local news, and newsletters, are still impactful, along with social media.

Target Publics

Primary Publics

- Local elected officials, local government staff – ambassadors and connectors
- Community leaders, including nonprofit directors, business owners and the Chamber of Commerce – potential clients
- Local news media – share Pathfinders story more widely

Secondary Publics

- State elected officials and staff – funding oversight
- Non-governmental funding agencies – new funders and partners

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Develop and Clear and Consistent Brand Identity for Pathfinders

- *Objective 1.* To develop owned media that clearly convey the mission, services, and successes of Pathfinders
- *Objective 2.* To implement updated visual branding that represents the current direction of Pathfinders
- *Objective 3.* To enhance web design and communication so it is user-friendly for current collaborators and new potential partners

Goal 2: Raise Awareness of Pathfinders Services Among Potential Clients and Collaborators

- *Objective 1.* To increase awareness of Pathfinders through media coverage in all five core counties in the service area
- *Objective 2.* To enhance the website with current media materials that illustrate Pathfinders' successes
- *Objective 3.* To establish Pathfinders as a first-choice collaborator for economic development and conservation projects through consistent digital media communication
- *Objective 4.* To develop Board of Directors members as ambassadors for Pathfinders in their local communities through improved onboarding

Key Messages

Key Messages

Conservation + Economic Development = Vibrant Communities

- Vibrancy of rural communities depends on both conservation and economic development
- The domains of expertise for Pathfinders are deeply connected and work together to create thriving rural communities

Communities are the Experts; Pathfinders Provide Scaffolding

- Community leaders have creative ideas about what their towns and counties need to thrive
- Pathfinders provide whatever support is needed to initiate projects with the goal of piloting self-sustaining projects with local management and long-term benefits
- “They take ideas to reality”

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<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/vanburencountyiowa,daviscountyiowa,jeffersoncountyiowa,wapellountyiowa,keokukcountyiowa,mahaskacountyiowa/PST045224>

Van Buren County, IA Website:

<https://www.vanburencounty.iowa.gov/>

Wapello County, IA Website:

<https://www.vanburencounty.iowa.gov/>

Logo, Brand Guide, and Branded Templates

Our team created a new logo, secondary icons, a brand guide and branded templates for Pathfinders. New colors and fonts modernized the compass logo, making it both easier to print on t-shirts, business cards, etc., and more memorable. The newer, simpler compass will allow for greater brand recognition and the target publics will automatically associate the brand colors with Pathfinders (similar to Target red or University of Iowa gold), while maintaining the strong historical association of Pathfinders with the original compass and green and gold colors.

We produced:

- Brand guide with fonts and primary and secondary colors
- Logo, with and without text
- Secondary logo
- Letterhead
- Press release template
- PowerPoint template
- Report template

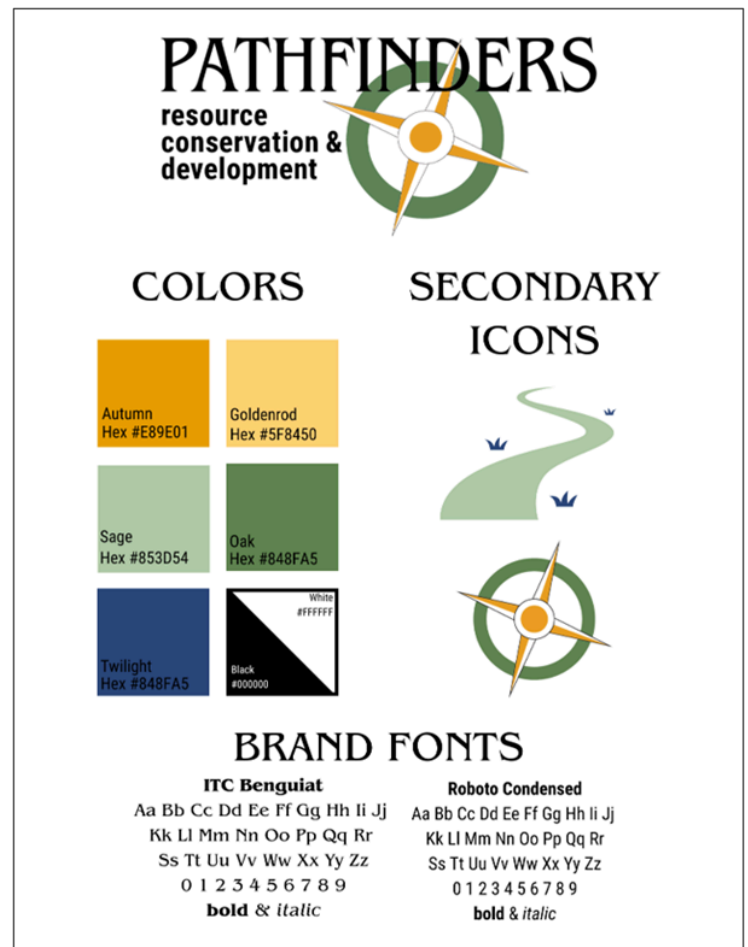
All new brand assets are in a single editable Canva document, so all communications and designs can easily be formatted to the specifications of the brand guide.

The intent behind the new logo and brand colors is to create a sense of familiarity in the target publics' minds. Potential clients may see the Pathfinders logo on the side of a work truck, then on a brochure in town hall, then hear about the organization in the paper—because all those visual assets will be cohesive, the potential client will see Pathfinders as a legitimate organization to partner with. Brand cohesion also helps with professionalism and unconsciously sets the organization a step above organizations that are less unified.

Logo



Brand Guide



Editing the Documents

To edit the brand guide and report template, Pathfinders will need access to Canva.com or Canva Pro. Pathfinders will need Adobe Illustrator to edit the compass and full text logos. For the blank letterhead, press release template, and PowerPoint templates, Pathfinders will need Microsoft Office.

Logo, Brand Guide, and Branded Templates

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Metrics

- *New Client Leads:* Tracking new leads Pathfinders receives within a set time frame compared to the same time frame the year before; an increase in leads would indicate increased brand awareness
- *Client Perception:* When the new brand is implemented, Pathfinders could send out an exit survey once the project is complete or the client leaves the organization and will ask how the brand and organization were perceived before and after the partnership. The survey will also ask how the client found Pathfinders (word of mouth, social media, website, brochure, event, etc.), which will help the organization know the best channels for marketing and pushing the new logo. Tracking client perception over time will also help demonstrate effectiveness of new communication channels

Implementation Plan/Budget

Task	Frequency/How Often	Responsibility (Who Does What)	Relevant Resource	Budget/Time
Update brand guide	Annually in January	Ashley	Brand guide	1 hr
Review logo and icons	Annually in January	Ashley	Adobe Illustrator files	1 hr
Use branded templates	When distributing press releases and official documents	Ashley, Krista, or other staff	Ensure all staff have access to brand guide and branded templates	None

Content

- [Brand guide](#)
- Logo, [with](#) and [without](#) text outlines
- [Secondary compass logo](#)
- [Letterhead](#)
- [Press release template](#)
- PowerPoint template ([green](#) or [orange](#))
- [Report template](#)

Illustrator Files

- Logo with letter outlines
- Logo without letter outlines
- Secondary compass

We recommend downloading copies of these documents to your computer so you own a copy of the files. The University of Iowa SharePoint system requires that links expire 180 days after their creation, so some of the above hyperlinks will expire on November 4, 2025.

Brochure

Our team created a general-interest Pathfinders brochure to communicate the organization's mission, function, and capabilities. The brochure was broad in scope to present the mission and to capture Pathfinders' impact in the communities it serves. The trifold visually appealing design attempts to catch readers attention while sharing a deep breadth of knowledge.

The brochure is designed to inform stakeholders in the community and highlight Pathfinders' wide range of capabilities and expertise. The brochure can be distributed at events but also shared with board members, as an onboarding tool and for them to use as ambassadors for Pathfinders in soliciting new clients within their communities.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Metrics

- *Stakeholder Engagement:* Tracking QR codes scanned, follow-up emails, social media follower count, as well as overall website traffic following an event when brochures are distributed

Content

- Brochure

We provide the scaffolding for YOUR great ideas!

Our work extends from our 5 member counties to communities across southeast Iowa. We've developed **more than 600 projects and partnerships** with communities and awarded **more than \$30 million in grant funding** for our partners.

From Our Partners

"Pathfinders is involved in almost every aspect of economic or community development. Whether it's funding, help putting it all together, help writing grants, or directing you to get more resources, Pathfinders does it all."

"Pathfinders is improving the quality of life in these communities, whether its beautifying the surrounding area or having tourism that helps the local economy."

"Without the Pathfinders team, our grant application probably would not have been successful. They have a gift with words."

Connect With Us!

pathfindersrcd.org

Follow our Facebook!
@Pathfinders RC&D

info@pathfindersrcd.org

PATHFINDERS
resource conservation & development

Creating vibrant communities by strengthening local economies and encouraging natural resource conservation since 1978.

Keosauqua, IA

Brochure

Key Projects

Historic Hills Scenic Byway
We support the visitor experience along the 110-mile byway by installing scenic wayfinding signs and enhancing tourism along the route.



Lake of the Hills Reclamation
We developed a comprehensive long-term plan to improve water quality and conservation in the Lake of the Hills watershed. This provided the groundwork for future improvement projects in Scott County.





Bloomfield, IA



Outdoor Recreation & Tourism

We develop and promote recreational assets to boost tourism, enhance the quality of life and strengthen local economies.



Youth Empowerment & Leadership

We co-create programs with youth that foster leadership, civic engagement, workforce readiness and personal development, which ensures that young people have a voice and a role in shaping their communities.



Conservation & Natural Resources

We support projects that protect, restore and enhance natural resources, with more than 1,700 acres of abandoned mine land restored so far.

How We Help



Economic & Community Development

We partner with local leaders to spark economic growth, revitalize main streets, attract business and build vibrant and resilient communities through planning, collaboration and resource development.



Grant Writing, Fiscal Management & Technical Assistance

We offer grant writing, project development, compliance support and financial management as fee-for-service offerings to help communities access funding, meet program goals and build local capacity.

Implementation Plan/Budget

Task	Frequency/How Often	Responsibility (Who Does What)	Relevant Resource	Budget (Time)	Budget (Cost)
Print 100 brochures for an event	As needed	Ashley	N/A	3-4 business days for printing	\$86 for 100 brochures
Update brochure contents for currency and accuracy	Annually in January	Ashley or Krista	Brochure	1-2 hrs	N/A

Media Kit

The media kit is a strategic tool for generating earned media coverage—coverage that comes from news outlets choosing to share your story because it’s timely, relevant, and community-focused.

- The *press release* provides essential facts and background about Pathfinders’ services, events, or initiatives. It positions the organization as a credible and active resource for local development and conservation, making it easier for news outlets to feature Pathfinders in their reporting.
- The *media pitch* is tailored to individual journalists or local outlets. It highlights what makes the story relevant to their audience and encourages deeper coverage—such as interviews, profiles, or event attendance.

By combining both, the media kit:

- Expands Pathfinders’ visibility across multiple counties
- Connects services to real local needs, increasing resonance with readers and viewers
- Builds relationships with media contacts, making future coverage more likely
- Reaches both general audiences and targeted stakeholders, such as potential collaborators or partner organizations

Together, the press release and pitch ensure consistent messaging while allowing flexibility to meet the needs of each outlet—maximizing the potential for widespread media coverage and stronger community recognition of Pathfinders’ impact.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Metrics

Media Coverage Secured in Each Core County

- **What It Measures:** The number of published or broadcasted stories by local media outlets in each of the core counties based on Pathfinders’ press release or media pitch
- **Why It Matters:** Securing local media coverage directly supports the goal of raising awareness among community members and leaders in Pathfinders’ core service area
- **How to Track:**
 - Monitor local newspapers, radio station websites, and news outlet social media pages in each county
 - Keep a coverage tracking spreadsheet logging each story’s title, outlet name, county, date, and URL or print copy

Increase in Event Attendance Following Media Coverage

- **What It Measures:** The difference in attendance numbers at Pathfinders events before and after media coverage is secured through press releases or pitches
- **Why It Matters:** Event turnout is a clear, measurable sign of increased community engagement and awareness. If attendance rises after media outreach, it shows that the media kit is successfully driving public action

- How to Track:
 - Use pre-registration forms, RSVP lists, or check-in sheets at events to track attendance
 - Record media coverage dates and compare attendance for similar events with and without coverage
 - Add a question to sign-up forms like “How did you hear about this event?” to directly attribute media impact
 - Analyze trends over time to see which outlets or coverage types generate the highest response

Press Release

A press release is an official statement delivered to the news media and posted on owned media (like an organization web site) for the purpose of providing new information, creating an official statement, making an announcement, or recapping an event. Press releases can be sent to multiple media outlets, as long as the story is relevant to that outlet's audience.

Press Release Best Practices

- **Tailor the message:** Strategically choose newsworthy events to write press releases on. Focusing media efforts on important events will prove more effective than every event that Pathfinders puts on.
- **Distribute strategically:** Send press releases to relevant journalists and media outlets. Sending press release to media within the county for the event would be beneficial as well as statewide media for Pathfinders larger events. Posting press releases on Pathfinders owned media channels would also be helpful in spreading the word.
- **When to send:** Send press releases 2-3 weeks in advance of an event. It is best to send them on a weekday during business hours. Avoid weekends and holidays unless time sensitive.

Template


- **Headline:** Should grab attention in one sentence
- **Date**
- **Opening paragraph:** Sum up the story. What are the facts? Who what, when, where, why, etc.
- **Second paragraph:** explain why this story is important
- **Quote:** Include a quote from whoever can speak about the importance of the event. Include name and title of speaker
- **Additional details/call to action:** How can the public become involved?

- **Boilerplate:** A short paragraph about Pathfinders
- **Media contact:** Where people can go if they have questions. Include name, email, phone, and website

Content

- [Press release template](#)

Press Release Template

	Pathfinders RC&D 403 South Maple Street #101 Fairfield, IA, 52556 641-472-6177 info@pathfindersrcd.org
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Press Release Headline in Title Case]

[(City, State, Date)] The first paragraph. Begin the press release with a two-sentence paragraph that provides a quick overview of the news and why it is important. It should read easily and make your news sound exciting to a general audience.

Next, provide some background information. Make sure to write your press release in terms that the general public will understand.

"[Quote from a relevant person that provides more specific information,]" says [first name last name].

Wrap up about why this is important.

ABOUT PATHFINDERS

Pathfinders RC&D was founded in the 1970s with the goal of creating vibrant communities through strengthening local economies and encouraging conservation. Pathfinders partners with cities, counties, organizations and individuals in southeast Iowa with a focus on their core service area of five counties. To learn more visit <https://pathfindersrcd.org>. Follow us on [Facebook](#).

Media Pitches

A pitch is a short, tailored message designed to capture media interest. Unlike a press release, a pitch is more informal and conversational—it serves as a tip, not a full story, and is sent to one person.

Effective pitches

- Position your organization as a valuable source for news
- Emphasize the relevance of your story to readers/viewers, not just to your organization
- Highlight the consumer/public value of your idea or event
- Are brief, customized for a specific outlet, and can be delivered via email, text, or call
- When a pitch is customized for a specific outlet, it means the message is strategically tailored to fit the outlet's audience, tone, format, and coverage interests. Rather than sending a one-size-fits-all message, a customized pitch shows the journalist or editor that you understand their work and that your story genuinely fits their platform
- Length: max ¾ page, 1.5 spaced, 12 pt. font

Content

- [Media pitch template](#)
- [Media contact list](#)

Media Name	Media Type	County	Contact
Southeast Iowa Union	Newspaper	Jefferson	Andy.Hallman@southeastiowaunion.co
Fairfield Ledger	Newspaper	Jefferson	641-472-4129
The Iowa Source	Newspaper	Jefferson	source@lisco.com .
1570 KMCD	Radio	Jefferson	(641) 472-4191
Ottumwa Courier	Newspaper	Wapello	https://www.ottumwacourier.com/site/forms
Ottumwa Post	Newspaper	Wapello	https://ottumwapost.com/index0.htm?twinc
Ottumwa Radio Group	Radio	Wapello	info@ottumwaradio.com
Bloomfield Democrat	Newspaper	Davis	bdemo@netins.net
KCRG News	TV	State Wide	https://www.kcrg.com/page/story-submi
Van Buren County Regist	Newspaper	Van Buren	vbregister@netins.net
The News-Review	Newspaper	Keokuk	news@eaglegroveeagle.com
Oskaloosa Herald	Newspaper	Mahaska	oskynews@oskyherald.com
Oskaloosa News	Online Newsp	Mahaska	info@oskynews.org
Iowa PBS	TV	State Wide	https://www.iowapbs.org/contact#no-ba
Iowa Public Radio	Radio	State Wide	news@iowapublicradio.org

Press Release Template



PATHFINDERS
resource
conservation &
development

Pathfinders RC&D
403 South Maple Street #101
Fairfield, IA, 52556
641-472-6177
info@pathfindersrcd.org

Date: [Insert Date]

From: [Your Name, Title]

Organization: [Your Organization Name]

Hello [Media Contact Name],

[Open with a strong hook that proposes a local need or issue. Why is this relevant now? Use an event, awareness week, community trend, or timely concern to anchor it.]

[Introduce your event/idea as the solution. Briefly describe what Pathfinders is doing to address the issue: What's happening? When and where is it taking place? Who is organizing or participating? Include 1–2 sentences on how the event or initiative is designed to meet the identified need—whether it's through education, collaboration, hands-on activities, or support for local communities.]

[Describe how this would benefit their audience and why it fits the publication's goals. Is there a strong local tie? A human-interest angle? A chance for audience involvement?]

[End with a clear call to action. Offer interviews, visuals, or a press kit. Make it easy for them to say yes.]

Best regards,
[Your Name]
[Contact Info]

Digital Newsletter

Reviving a digital newsletter will help Pathfinders raise awareness and increase engagement among collaborators and clients through consistent communication. The newly developed newsletter will possess an updated logo, letter from the director, updates, client features, opportunities, calendar, and appealing photos.

Featuring clients and project photos will help Pathfinders demonstrate the range of successful collaborations across their five service buckets. Adding local legislators and business owners to the email list will also help spread awareness of Pathfinders' work among well-connected individuals across the service area.

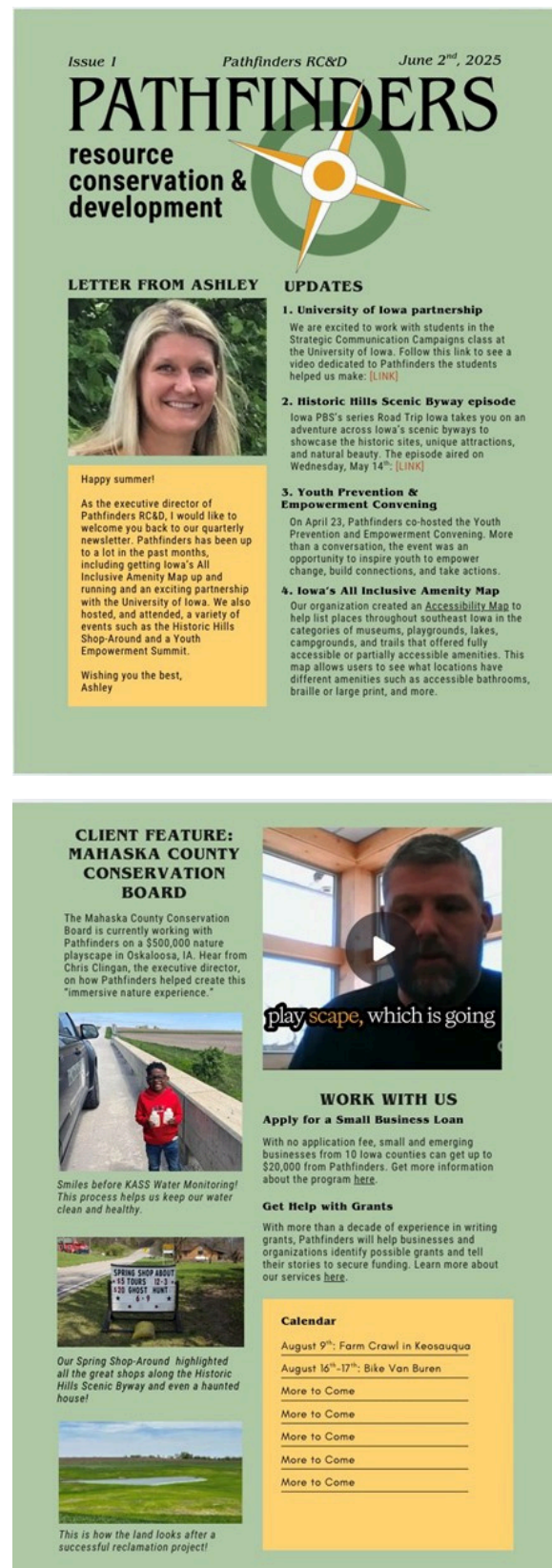
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Metrics

- **Subscriber Base:** Subscriber base refers to the number of people who receive the newsletter. Our goal is for Pathfinders to increase their newsletter subscribers, which consist of elected officials, potential clients, funding partners, and local news media, by 10% each quarter
- **Open Rate:** Open rate refers to the percentage of respondents who open a sent email. This info is captured as part of MailChimp's analytics. Our goal is to reach a 50% newsletter open rate through quarterly emails sent to elected officials, potential clients, funding partners, and local news media

Content

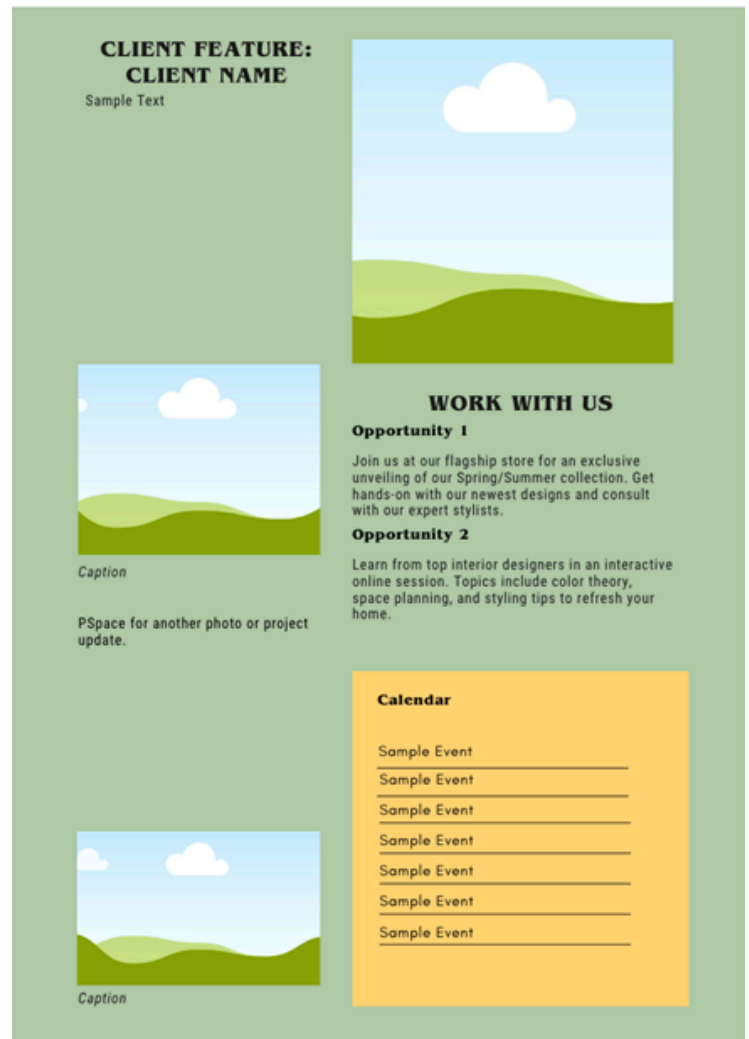
- Newsletter, publication schedule, and sample issue

Sample Issue



Digital Newsletter

Blank Template



Digital Newsletter

Implementation Plan/Budget

Task	Frequency/How Often	Responsibility (Who Does What)	Relevant Resource	Budget (Time)	Budget (Cost)
Assemble and edit email list	Annually in May	Ashley	https://www.wpbeginner.com/beginners-guide/how-to-create-an-email-newsletter/	1 hr	N/A
Write copy for newsletter	Quarterly, write copy a month before distribution	Team updates from everyone, everything else from Ashley	Newsletter template	4 hrs	N/A
Design newsletter	Quarterly, a week before distribution	Ashley or Krista	Newsletter template	4 hrs	N/A
Distribute newsletter	Quarterly, starting in June 2025	Ashley	https://mailchimp.com	15 minutes	500 contacts for \$20 per month 1,500 contacts for \$45 per month

Website Redesign

As the first place many people go when they're curious about Pathfinders' work, the website can convey the organization's mission, tell compelling stories about the range of projects Pathfinders takes on and the work they can provide for clients, and serve as a hub to get connected to regular communication from Pathfinders, like the newsletter or social media.

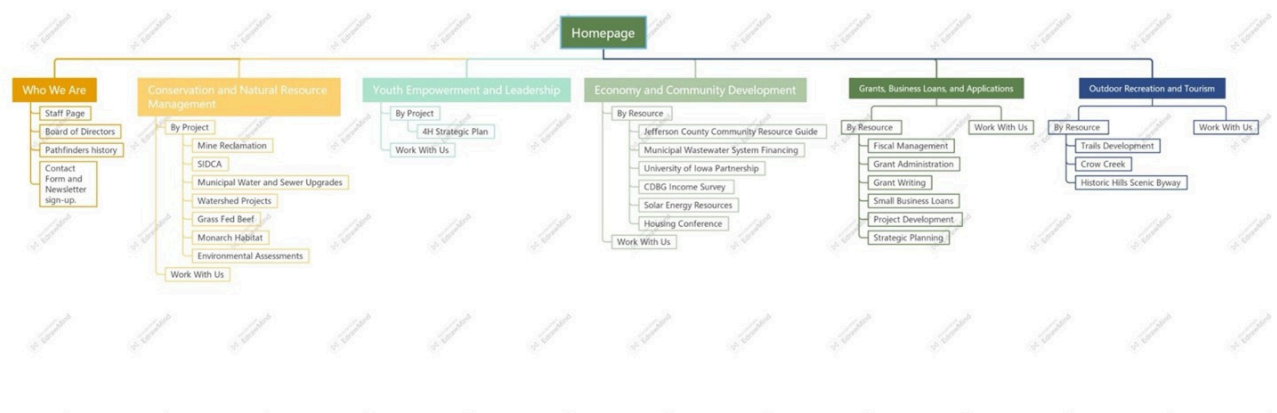
Our team provided a sample home page and project page, along with a site map for a new organization for Pathfinders content. The content on the web page is already comprehensive and clearly written; the goal is to reduce duplication and improve navigability, while providing a regularly updated resource that tells the Pathfinders story by emphasizing the range of successful projects across southeast Iowa.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Metrics

- **Organic Search Traffic:** The number of visitors to a website after a search on Google or another search engine; organic means visitors find the site through the search engine results not by clicking on an ad. Data on organic search traffic can be found through tools like [Google Analytics](#), under the "Acquisition" or "Traffic Sources" sections. Organic search traffic can indicate how a website is performing in relation to other sites for relevant keywords and search terms
- **Time Spent on the Website:** An increase in the amount of time spent on the website shows that website users are more engaged with the content
- **Conversion Rate:** An increased percentage of website visitors completing an action like signing up for a newsletter or filling out a contact form can indicate improved engagement with website content
 - Conversion rate is calculated by dividing the number of sign-ups/contacts/etc. by the total number of visitors to the website, then multiplying by 100

Content

- [Site template](#)
- [Site map](#)



Website Redesign

Implementation Plan/Budget

Task	Frequency/How Often	Responsibility (Who Does What)	Relevant Resource	Budget (Time)
Update upcoming events	Once a month	Ashley or a social media intern	https://pathfindersrcd.org	1 hr
Update project pages with new projects or photos	As needed, review content monthly for accuracy	Ashley or a social media intern	https://pathfindersrcd.org	1 hr

Social Media Marketing Plan

Our team provides suggestions and sample content to update Pathfinders social media presence and increase visibility and engagement. A small investment of time in updating social media across domains of expertise will demonstrate the range of work Pathfinders takes on for clients, highlight successes that improve the vibrancy of rural communities, and offer opportunities to tag collaborators to increase visibility and grow the network.

Materials Provided

- A social media implementation plan
- A sample content calendar
- Content examples from another RC&D with a more active social media presence
- Sample content created for Pathfinders
- A tip sheet for creating effective social media content
- An advertisement for a social media intern

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or Metrics

- Reach and Impressions: Number of users that have seen your content (reach) and the number of times your content has been displayed (impressions)
- Profile Growth Rates and Visits: This metric tracks how many people visit your profile, and at what rate your profile is gaining followers to show how effective your content is at retaining interest in your organization
- Likes/Comments/Shares: These metrics show engagement with specific posts. Engagement should increase as your social media follower count increases

All metrics can be found in your Instagram and Facebook analytics page.

Content

- Social media content calendar

Pathfinders Content Calendar

File

Edit

View

Insert

Format

Data

Tools

Extensions

Help

🔍

🖨

📄

100%

View only

A1:I1

Week 1

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
1	Week 1											
2	Channel	Day	Published?	Date	Department	Post Topic	Copy	Visual Type	Link to visual	Name	Link to content	
3	Instagr...	Tuesday	✓	4/22/2025	Conse...	Projec...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Crista)	(insta/ fb link)	
4	Faceb...	Tuesday	✓	4/22/2025	Conse...	Projec...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
5	Instagr...	Thurs...	✓	4/24/2025	Outdo...	Event ...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
6	Faceb...	Thurs...	☐	4/24/2025	Outdo...	Event ...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
7	Week 2											
8	Instagr...	Monday	☐	4/28/2025	Econo...	Projec...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
9	Faceb...	Monday	☐	4/28/2025	Econo...	Projec...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
10	Instagr...	Wedn...	☐	4/30/2025	Fee-fo...	Infogr...	(Caption)	Graphi...	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
11	Faceb...	Wedn...	☐	4/30/2025	Fee-fo...	Infogr...	(Caption)	Graphi...	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
12	Instagr...	Friday	☐	5/2/2025	Youth ...	Local ...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
13	Faceb...	Friday	☐	5/2/2025	Youth ...	Local ...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
14	Week 3											
15	Instagr...	Tuesday	☐	5/6/2025	Conse...	Behin...	(Caption)	Short ...	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
16	Faceb...	Tuesday	☐	5/6/2025	Conse...	Behin...	(Caption)	Short ...	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
17	Instagr...	Thurs...	☐	5/8/2025	Outdo...	Projec...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	
18	Faceb...	Thurs...	☐	5/8/2025	Econo...	Projec...	(Caption)	Photo	(Dropbox link)	(ex: Ashley)	(insta/ fb link)	

Social Media Marketing Plan

Implementation Plan

Department Goals	Each department/ bucket (Conservation & Natural Resource Management, Outdoor Recreation & Tourism, Economic & Community Development, Fee-for-Service Support, and Youth Empowerment & Leadership) will aim for one post every 2 weeks (2 /3 posts per week in total).
Dropbox and File Storage	<p>Dropbox is an online storage system that allows users to easily upload and share content either online or through the app. Each department will be able to have their own folder where they will upload content (photos and general descriptions of what is happening in the photos) that the social media coordinator can then access and use to create the posts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective way to label photos is "year_month_date_brief description_initials." Example: "2025_4_20_youthevent_KT." This makes it easy to find photos based on the date, event, or employee/photographer • Then, upload a document with the same file name (2025_4_20_youthevent_KT_doc) with a brief paragraph explaining what is happening in the photo <p>Each department can also create links to specific folders and content that they will be able to easily share. <u>This video shows the potential file management set up on DropBox.</u></p>
Google Calendar/Sheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees will be in a shared Google calendar (or other shared calendar) which will show the deadlines for uploading content. The content will be due a day before each department's posts are scheduled to be posted. • Google sheets will be utilized for a content calendar. This allows posts to be planned in advance, and it is easy to alter and add (see Sample Content Calendar)
Social Media Intern	If Pathfinders decides to add on a social media intern, department goals will increase.

Social Media Marketing Plan

Example Content Types

Project Updates The easiest content you can create. Take a quick photo of your current projects and create a post with their status updates.	Local Updates Connected with your community! Post local updates, whether that's new businesses or local events. It could also be photo or video, or even graphics announcing upcoming events.
Event Photos Events are perfect for photos! Make sure you take lots of photos of people interacting with events to post after the event is over.	Conservation or Other Relevant News Topics Highlight any news about conservation in Iowa that could affect Pathfinders and the local community.
Infographics Infographics can easily be created on Canva to advertise upcoming Pathfinders events or local events.	Reused Project Photos No new content? You can always use photos from previous projects to highlight the successes you've had.
Behind the Scenes This type of content would be perfect for short video. When you're working on a project, take a short video about how it's coming along to use for Instagram reels.	Testimonials This content can be photo or video. If you have any videos of clients talking about their experience with Pathfinders or photos of satisfied clients, use them to increase your dependability.

Social Media Marketing Plan

Sample Pathfinders Content

These posts and draft captions were developed using photos of projects and events provided by Pathfinders' staff.

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD This week we spent time filming a special project with Iowa PBS on the Byway! It premieres on ___ don't miss it!

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD The Kayak Rental is back up and running for spring starting on ___!

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD This week our very own Krista spoke at the __ Youth Conference to talk about ___.

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD This week our very own Krista spoke at the __ Youth Conference to talk about ___.

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD We meet with Congressman Nunn this week to talk about the needs of rural communities!

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD The best part of the weather getting warmer is kayaking! Go check out our Kayak Rental which is now open for the season!

Pathfinders RC&D



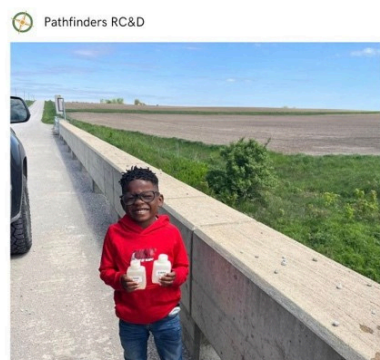
@PathfindersRCD We are excited to announce our next Field Day will be on __ at ___ in ___ at their ___ Park! Come hang out with us and enjoy a meal!

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD Project Update! We are making progress on the __ abandoned mine lands project over in ____.

Pathfinders RC&D



@PathfindersRCD This week our very own Tori met with local kids to talk about water quality and why its so important here in Iowa!

Social Media Marketing Plan

One-Page Pathfinders Staff Social Media Tip Sheet

Why Social Media & What People Want to Consume

- Social media creates brand awareness about Pathfinders services and successes.
- The first step is just incorporating getting content into the normal parts of your routine. Whether you're on a job site for a new project or at a city council meeting, you can be capturing content that Pathfinders' followers would enjoy seeing. It's as simple as one photo or video every week.

Facebook

- On Facebook, the visuals themselves are less important because people on Facebook want you to be straight to the point. A few photos with a larger caption will do well here.
- Whether that's posting links to articles written about different things Pathfinders has going on in the community or showing a quick update on a project, the content driven by Facebook is focused on informing people in an interesting and concise way.

Instagram

- Aesthetics (how visually appealing your posts are) is everything. When people are on Instagram, they want everything to be pleasing to look at and cohesive.
- You'll learn quickly looking at sites of people with successful Instagram accounts that on their grid (profile page) all the photos match. While your grid doesn't need to be perfect, it's important to remember that the first photo you put in a post matters because that is what will show up when people go to look at the profile!

- For posts on Instagram, people also really want to see content they will relate to, which means on Instagram you want to make sure you're highlighting the people and their stories rather than just the details of the work being done.
- When you go to post, tagging someone in a photo can help increase your engagement, because it helps direct their following to your accounts. You also have the option to invite someone else to be a collaborator which means that if they accept, your post also gets posted on their accounts so all their followers will see it too. This helps extend your reach to other audiences!

How to Take a Good Photo or Video

- When taking photos or videos, it doesn't need to be perfect but it does need to be done with intention. When taking a photo or video, first and foremost be sure to have a clear subject. Don't just take a photo of a general scene, but pick something specific you want people to look at and make sure that's obvious by how you've highlighted that in the image.
- The next thing to think about is the lighting. If you think it looks dark on your phone when you're taking it, it probably is! Simply shifting the angle or background can help so much!
- Be sure that your subject is centered in the middle when taking photos or videos.

Content

- One-Page Social Media Tip Sheet


Print out this page for Pathfinders' staff, or download the linked document to keep a plain-text version of this content.

Social Media Marketing Plan

Content

- [One-Page Social Media Tip Sheet](#)
- [In-Depth Social Media Tip Sheet](#)

Print out page 21 of this report for Pathfinders' staff to have the one-page social media tip sheet, or download the linked document to keep a plain-text version of this content.



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In-Depth Social Media Tip Sheet

Why Social Media

Although at Pathfinders you connect with a lot of your target audience via word of mouth, social media is still a huge tool that can be utilized to your advantage to create a sense of brand awareness or even get the word out about all the things you offer. Social media for you guys can be super simple even though it might feel daunting! The first step is just incorporating getting content into the normal parts of your routine. Whether you're on a job site for a new project, at a city council meeting, or meeting with former clients, you can be capturing content that Pathfinder's followers would enjoy seeing. It's as simple as one photo or video every week. This tip sheet is going to walk you through what a successful social media does, what to look for when taking photos or videos and even a simple breakdown of how to take a good photo.

Facebook v. Instagram


The main social media platforms we want you to focus on is Facebook and Instagram because that is where most of your target audience is going to be. While content your staff takes can be purposed for both sites, each site requires slightly different techniques to be successful.

Facebook

- Aesthetics are a little less important, people on Facebook want you to be straight to the point and show them what you're up to.
- Usually, a couple photos for a post will do well here and this site is where you want to highlight the details of what you're up to.
- Whether that's posting links to articles written about different things Pathfinders has going on in the community or showing a quick update on a current project, Facebook is the place to be focuses on the details behind the content rather than just the content itself.

Instagram

- Aesthetics are everything.
- When people are on Instagram they want everything to look aesthetically pleasing and be coordinated.



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Social Media Tip Sheet

Why Social Media & What People Want to Consume:

- Social media creates brand awareness about Pathfinders services and successes.
- The first step is just incorporating getting content into the normal parts of your routine. Whether you're on a job site for a new project or at a city council meeting, you can be capturing content that Pathfinders' followers would enjoy seeing. It's as simple as one photo or video every week.

Facebook:

- On Facebook, the visuals themselves are less important because people on Facebook want you to be straight to the point. A few photos with a larger caption will do well here.
- Whether that's posting links to articles written about different things Pathfinders has going on in the community or showing a quick update on a project, the content driven by Facebook is focused on informing people in an interesting and concise way.

Instagram:

- Aesthetics (how visually appealing your posts are) is everything. When people are on Instagram, they want everything to be pleasing to look at and cohesive.
- You'll learn quickly looking at sites of people with successful Instagram accounts that on their grid (profile page) all the photos match. While your grid doesn't need to be perfect, it's important to remember that the first photo you put in a post matters because that is what will show up when people go to look at the profile!
- For posts on Instagram, people also really want to see content they will relate to, which means on Instagram you want to make sure you're highlighting the people and their stories rather than just the details of the work being done.
- When you go to post, tagging someone in a photo can help increase your engagement, because it helps direct their following to your accounts. You also have the option to invite someone else to be a collaborator which means that if they accept, your post also gets posted on their accounts so all their followers will see it too. This helps extend your reach to other audiences!

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Social Media Marketing Plan

Part-Time Social Media Intern

Why

Hiring a social media intern would ensure there is content being posted regularly to expand Pathfinders awareness and increase the visibility of the organization. An intern would be knowledgeable in social media marketing and be able to maintain a cohesive and engaging social media presence, as well as take the workload off Pathfinders employees who are currently maintaining their social media along with their other responsibilities.

Job Description

The social media intern is responsible for maintaining Pathfinders' social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram) by uploading regular content and interacting with followers to increase overall engagement.

Potential Responsibilities


- Reaching out to each department to receive weekly content ideas/ photos for content
- Creating graphics for static posts, as well as collecting photo and video content for different types of posts
- Posting 4/5x per week, preferably one post per department (2 reels/video content, 3 static posts)
- Responding to comments and direct messages
- Monitoring post insights to gauge the outreach of the content (views, click through rate, likes, comments, engagement, etc.)
- Maintaining the content calendar and scheduling the posts

Requirements

- Knowledgeable about different social media platforms
- Experience using platforms (personally or professionally)
- Basic photography and video skills
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Basic graphic design abilities (Canva, Adobe)
- Knowledge about Pathfinders' work/non-profits in rural communities

Content

- Social Media Intern Job Description



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Pathfinders Social Media Intern Job Description

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Explainer Video

The goal of an explainer video is to clearly explain a concept, issue, or brand to a wide audience using compelling storytelling and visuals. An explainer video fits our goals for Pathfinders because it conveys the mission of Pathfinders to promote economic development and conservation for vibrant rural communities in the words of key staff members. Staff members are the best messengers for the video because they understand and can explain the range of projects Pathfinders undertakes for clients, along with how all those projects support the overall mission.

Imagery in the video conveys the two arms of Pathfinders mission, economic development and conservation, and aims to give a sense of community thriving by featuring a range of nature shots, events and community meetings, and public spaces like parks and downtowns in the service area that Pathfinders has helped improve.

Content

- [Explainer video](#)



Campaign Implementation Plan

The goal of our campaign is to be adaptive to the current capacity for communication given a small staff with many duties who operate independently. The overall implementation shows the estimated investment of time and funds to execute the suggested communication tactics, including annual updates. Any additions of staff, like a communications or social media intern, would decrease the amount of time needed. The goal is to build these processes as work habits to get the benefit of more intentional communications and branding without a big drain on time or budget.

Task	Frequency/How Often	Responsibility (Who Does What)	Relevant Resource	Budget (Time)	Budget (Cost)
Update brand guide, review logo and icons	Annually in January	Ashley	<u>Brand guide</u>	1 hour per year	N/A
Use branded templates	As needed for press releases and official documents	Ashley, Krista, or other staff	Folder on computer	N/A	N/A
Update brochure	Semi-annually in January and July	Ashley	<u>Brochure</u>	1 hour every 6 months	\$86 for 100 brochures
Press releases/pitches	As needed, about 3 weeks before event	Event lead	Folder on computer	1 hour per press release/pitch	N/A
Newsletter	Quarterly in June, September, December and March	Ashley, Krista, and other staff	<u>Newsletter template</u>	4 hours per quarter	\$20 per month for 500 subscribers
Website updates	Monthly or as needed	Ashley	Website	1 hour monthly	N/A
Social media posts	3-5 posts weekly	Ashley, Krista, or other staff	Dropbox	1-2 hours weekly	N/A