10-1-2020

2019 Student Bicentennial Marketing Plan

Jeremy Carter
Tasha Jones
Juliana Maddox
Kasja Robinson
Ashlei Wasdyke

Follow this and additional works at: https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review

Part of the United States History Commons

Recommended Citation
Carter, Jeremy; Jones, Tasha; Maddox, Juliana; Robinson, Kasja; and Wasdyke, Ashlei (2020) "2019 Student Bicentennial Marketing Plan," Huntsville Historical Review: Vol. 45: No. 2, Article 5.
Available at: https://louis.uah.edu/huntsville-historical-review/vol45/iss2/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by LOUIS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Huntsville Historical Review by an authorized editor of LOUIS.
Executive Summary

In 2019 Alabama celebrated 200 years as a state but how does 2019 become an historical topic that belongs in our Review? Think 3019!

Our authors challenge themselves to describe the characters in our community before 1819 and all the years that followed. Here we have a student effort that illustrates what a specific group of Huntsvillians care about today. The focus is on generation Y i.e., millennials.

Titles for a generation is a relatively new concept. The first generation assigned a title very well could be the silent generation that grew up in the depression era (1928 – 1945). Their offspring are baby boomers (1946-1964) and then it becomes more challenging. Generation X: (1965-1980), And Generation Y, (the Millennials), (1980 and 1994). They are the largest segment of the population that add earning power to the economy today.

The Historical Society designed the Marker Challenge to attract interest in local history. And since technology has changed the way we communicate to the community we wanted to know; what appeals to the millennials and how do we attract that segment of our population to history? Students of the University of Alabama, Huntsville Marketing Department document their analysis, insight, and recommendations regarding the generation that kicks off the next 200 years of Alabama history. (The Editor)

The purpose of this marketing plan is to identify an Alabama Bicentennial event and find a way to market the event to Millennials, people between 18 to 35 old. The team began by exploring the mission, vision, and values of the Alabama Bicentennial. Then we turned to the concept of the Historical Societies’ Marker Challenge. The situation analysis utilizes secondary data regarding the political, economic, sociocultural aspects of the concept while considering the technological savvy of the Millennial population. An analysis that highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats
(SWOT) associated with the proposed Challenge concluded that adding the concept of a scavenger hunt to the Historical Marker Challenge generate more interest from Millennials. Furthermore, the primary data gathered consists of survey information that pinpointed the best avenues that would reach the target market. Lastly, the marketing mix defined the details and rules regarding the (Product); a scavenger hunt; how it could be marketed (Promotion); how it will be facilitated (Place); and how participants pay for the event (Price).

**Introduction**

The Alabama Bicentennial celebrates the state's 200th birthday over three years - 2017, 2018, and 2019 as well as the "people, places, and events from our rich history".¹

**Mission, Vision, Values**²

**Mission:** “The mission of ALABAMA 200 is to support, create, and execute events and activities that commemorate the stories of our people, place, and path to statehood. Between 2017 and 2019. ALABAMA 200 will engage residents and visitors in educational programs, community activities, and statewide initiatives that teach, inspire, and entertain.”

**Vision:** ALABAMA 200 is an unprecedented opportunity to experience and explore the state of Alabama. It is a chance to celebrate our place in each of the 67 counties that stretch from the Shoals to the shores. It is a moment to remember the people who made our state and to nurture the generations who will carry us forward. It is an opportunity to chart a
vibrant and prosperous future for the state with history as our guide.  

**Values:** "Formed as a territory, on March 3, 1817, Alabama became the nation’s twenty-second state on December 14, 1819. Alabama 200 is a three-year celebration of the people, places, and events that form our rich history.

**The Business Challenge**

The business challenge for the Historical Society is to designate an appropriate celebration event or program for the target age range of 18-35 (Millenials) and establish a marketing plan to reach the target audience.

Our team determined the Historical Marker Challenge is possibly the ideal event to use to market the Bicentennial celebration to the Millennial population. Furthermore, the demand for implementing a game into the Marker Challenge, such as a scavenger hunt, will be addressed in this plan.

It is our initial hypothesis that a scavenger hunt will make exploring the Historical Markers fun and interesting. Additionally, we hope to find a way to reward participants who join with free or discounted items from local merchants.

Implementation of our findings is left to the discretion of the Historical Society executives.

**The Historical Marker Challenge**

The Historical Marker Challenge was created by Deane Dayton and Arley McCormick in an effort to entice residents to learn about Madison County history. The Marker Challenge webpage---https://hmchs.info/mkrs/---features 131 markers on 7 trails; Downtown and Twickenham; Greater
Downtown; Greater Huntsville; Monte Sano: Southeast Madison County; North Madison County; and Southwest Madison County.

Marker Challenge participants receive a certificate for completing 80% of a single trail by recording a three-letter code unique to each marker they visit. If participants record 80% of the markers on all the trails, they receive a free medallion for their accomplishment. Markers can be found on the webpage or through the progressive webpage app (PWA) on mobile devices. Furthermore, the PWA provides links to Google Maps and the Tracker App for recording historical marker visits. Those without a mobile device can download a map from the webpage and manually record their codes and enter them on the webpage upon completion of a trail. All challenge participants must register online to participate.

**Situation Analysis: External Environment**

Based on the parameters of the business challenge and the Historical Marker Challenge, the Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological (PEST) analysis method was used to research funding sources, understand Millennial economic and sociocultural trends, and weigh the values of two types of mobile applications.

**PEST Analysis of Madison County with Secondary Data**

**Political – Fiscal Policy:** Alabama has multiple private and public funding sources.iii Private sources include 13 community foundations, including The Daniel Foundation; The Alabama Humanities Foundation, and the Gwyn Turner Endowed Fund. These organizations provide funding for community
improvement, arts and culture, and historic preservation. Additionally, a public funding source, such as the Alabama State Council on the Arts awards grants for operating support, technological assistance, collaborative ventures, and program development.

**Economic --- Millennial Economic Factors;** Millennials in the U.S. spend about $600 billion annually and carry about $1 trillion in student loan debt. Subsequently, the generation spends only two-thirds on entertainment compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X. 94% of U.S. Millennials utilize coupons and 60% prefer generic rather than name brand products. Their average annual income is $56,099.ivv

**Sociocultural – Cultural Trends of Millennials**

**Travel;** 88% of millennials live in metropolitan areas. Cultural trends indicate that Millennials are interested in travel.iii #travel has been used 242 million times on Instagram.iv Additionally, travel is becoming more personalized as Millennials utilize mobile apps to pin popular places to eat, sleep, and drink. 94% of Millennials go out to eat monthly, spending $163 and $75 more if they consume alcohol. They also spend $38 per month on coffee.viii Millennials are more interested in learning outside of the classroom by connecting with people from all over the world. 75% of Millennials believe they have more impact at events in person than online.ivi

**Convenience;** Convenience is an important element in the daily lives of Millennials. Hence, they are more likely to purchase products and services that focus on the problem-solution marketing method.v Millennials are the only generation that prefers social media marketing compared to television advertisements. Furthermore, they spend more time online than
watching television.\textsuperscript{xi} 76\% said their biggest pet peeve is trying to navigate non-mobile-friendly websites\textsuperscript{xii}.

**Technological – Mobile Application:** Mobile Apps provide smart marketing, including push notifications, which provide up to 40\% click through rates vs. only 20.25\% for emails.\textsuperscript{xiii} There are two main types of mobile applications; Native Apps and Progressive Web Apps (PWA). Push notifications are available on all mobile devices with Native Apps and only Android with Progressive Web Apps. Mobile applications’ abilities and the two types of mobile application are discussed in detail in this section.

**Native Apps:** Native Apps are created for a particular mobile devise, like an Apple or Android smartphone. Computer languages utilized for native apps include Java and Kotlin for Android or Objective-C or Swift for iOS. After the native app’s creation, the content is downloaded to a device from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. Once downloaded, native apps automatically create an icon on the user’s phone. Native Apps require updates, but have the ability to function without an internet connection or when the connection is spotty. Additionally, Native Apps provide layered security through Multi-Factor Authentication. Native Apps must comply with Apple and Google safety guidelines to be accepted and sold in their respective app stores. It’s easier to change settings on a Native App as well because most PWA settings are part of the browser content. Native Apps have the ability to sync with other device apps: GPS, Geofencing, Accelerometer, compass, contact list, alarm, calendar, SMS, push notifications and mobile payments.

**Progressive Web Apps:** Progressive Web Apps are accessible through the mobile devices’ web browser,
like Apple’s Safari web browser. Web apps do not require updates, but must be in constant contact with the web browser. These app sites can easily be saved manually to the user’s screen as an icon. Progressive Web Apps have the ability to work offline as well by using cached data, but cannot perform all functions. If there are any new submissions to the web page, the user will need an internet connection. PWA’s only offer more security with site logins and secure pages – https.

**Instagram;** Globally, more than 70% of Instagram users are under the age of 35 and 60% learn about new products and/or services through the app.\textsuperscript{xiv}

**Downtown Huntsville Data**

The following data is demographic information for people living in the following Huntsville area zip codes; 35801, 35802, 35805, 35806, 35816, and 35896. The total population within these zip codes is 62,660 with 48.5% male and 51.49% female. 25% of them are Millennials. The median age is 34 and 31.51% are married. Furthermore, the median income of this population is $62,608. 86% of the group are Christian and 55% attend services once a week.\textsuperscript{xv} \textsuperscript{xvi}

**Internal Environment: Analysis of the Historical Marker Challenge**

**Culture;** Madison county is rich with the history of Alabama’s beginnings, changes, and future of the State, and with that comes opportunities for our younger generations to learn and pass on information. Huntsville, is the proud birthplace and first capital of Alabama and has half a dozen historic attractions that make history and learning come to life for all ages. The Historical Marker Challenge was formed in an effort to
promote and preserve the existing markers found throughout the county. This state has a rich tradition of remembering the past and commemorating special or crucial times by marking the locations with signs that include information about these moments. They can be found all over the state and 88 of them are found right here in Madison County. The culture of the Marker Challenge is one that promotes learning about these moments and also encourages people to visit all of the markers in order to receive a medallion that commemorates their efforts. Because of the vast variety of people in this area. It can be an opportunity to learn about where they were born, where they are now, or where they will be calling home from now on.

Capabilities; The Challenge has the capability to promote local business, get people active and interested in history, and raise money for the Huntsville-Madison County Historical Society through donations and sponsorship. They could also partner with local business to spread awareness of the challenge; specifically, those nearest to the markers in metropolitan areas.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths; Madison County Historical Markers are located near metropolitan neighborhoods. The ideal place to reach the Millennial market. Additionally, the Marker Challenge has a detailed map of all the historical marker locations.

Weaknesses; Because this demographic generation spends less on entertainment, it is less likely that they would be interested in events with high entry fees. This means that free or student priced events are the best suited to for attract the Millennial demographic.
Promotional items and incentives, such as food and beverages are also a common attractor for this group. The Historical Marker Challenge and the potential AL200 marker challenge that we are proposing does not currently have a committed source of local businesses in place to make this marketing campaign work. However, with the connections already in place through the Bicentennial and Mrs. Sally Warden, these barriers can be broken and the project can, potentially, be very successful.

The Historical Marker Challenge website and application can also be considered a weakness in that the web application needs improvement in order to appeal to millennials. It currently functions as a Progressive Web Application, which could be problematic for users with limited time but would like to participate in the challenge and connect to other Native Applications such as their mobile device, camera, and Instagram Native Opps. A downloadable/printable map of the markers is available, but ink costs a lot of money and printing a full-page map may not be feasible for many millennials based on their college workload and/or income. If the application had the advantage of allowing a user to pin their locations as many others have utilized, Millennials would find it more efficient and an enticement to participate in the scavenger hunt.

Opportunities; There are numerous restaurants, hotels, and churches that can help provide marketing for the Historical Marker Challenge. Based on the preliminary and secondary research collected there are many avenues available to reach Millennials in Madison county. An Historical Marker Scavenger hunt can put a unique spin on the existing challenge and appeal to younger generations as well.
**Threats:** Considering the interest millennials have in travel, the marker challenge has potential but it is also faced with competition from other attractions. This area is full of interesting places to explore and Millennials have the inclination to be active and are more adventurous than other generations. Yet instead of traveling into Historic Downtown Huntsville, this demographic may find travelling to Nashville for the weekend more appealing than walking or driving the trails to markers.

**Primary Market Research**

**Surveys:** Aside from the copious amount of secondary data available, gathering primary data by conducting surveys is very costly. Out of the team’s effort, 86 surveys were completed in full via Survey Monkey.com. The survey consisted of six questions:

- What is your age range?
- What is your sex?
- What is your interest in your home city’s history?
- What type of outings do you enjoy?
- Would you be interested in an outdoor historical scavenger hunt?
- How many times per month do you go out?

The following data illustrates all who participated and a breakout the percentage for those between the ages of 18-35.
**Recommendation: Marketing Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of this marketing plan are to provide value to residents and visitors to Madison County, aged 18-35, by providing a Native Mobile Application with functionality for an intricate and dynamic scavenger hunt that leads users to historical markers. The purpose of the scavenger hunt is to provide entertainment to users while they learn more about the county’s history. The Native App will provide access to other Native Apps, such as their mobile device camera and Instagram Application while maintaining a constant connection to maps to the markers.

**Marketing Strategies**

**Segmentation:** The segmentation for the Historical Marker Scavenger Hunt will differ between multiple demographics within the target age range of 18-35. From the data collected the following criteria highlights the geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral aspects of the target population.

**Targeting Millennials:** Millennials want to save money and time. They are urban dwellers, travel and depend upon mobile friendly Native Apps for social media and advertising. They use Instagram and they are Christians that attend services once per week. They go out in comfortable weather with friends and participate in events where a prize is offered about 4-9 times per month.

**Positioning:** The Historical Marker Scavenger Hunt should position itself on the following attributes: ease of mobile app use, low-cost fun with friends, prizes, and competition.
The Marketing Mix

Product: Scavenger Hunt; While the Progressive Web App is still in use, players must download or print the maps of the marker trails and decide which one(s) they would like to attempt. The most popular ones are going to be the marker trails that are closest or end at a business in which they can receive a prize. After the player(s) chose their map, the player or team travel to the first location on the route. We suggest having the first marker start farther away from the local business hubs and let them work their way towards the hub. This will expose them to more of what Huntsville has to offer as well as get them to local businesses as they play. The players must record a certain number of markers depending on the trail. For example, if they choose a trail that has 40 markers on it, they must visit at least 4 of the markers to obtain a prize.

*Potential for receiving better prizes for more markers visited. When the player(s) arrive at a marker, they must take a photo of themselves with the marker in the background or, if in teams of two or more, have at least one team member standing next to the marker in a picture taken by another member.

** Secondary option: local businesses participate in the hunt and provide clues, perhaps with coupons to encourage return business.

*** Tertiary option: to make a longer game (i.e. go all the way through a map) provide quiz questions for each trail to answer to turn in to a local business and win a prize; again, potential for better prizes for more questions answered. These questions could be in Quizlet form, on the website, in printable form, or added to the app option.

Each marker map include samples of the county scenery near the marker and encourage participants to
visualize the area as it was during the time the marker describes. Upon completion of recording the desired markers, hand over to one of the local businesses listed on the app and receive a free or discount item as their trophy! *with the secondary options; the player could accumulate coupons, thus promoting future business and word-of-mouth advertising for businesses. The players could be encouraged shop while they participate in the challenge, which would potentially promote the challenge and the business.

**Promotion;** The most likely way to reach the target population for this scavenger hunt is through social media, such as Instagram. When advertising through this platform, it will be important to highlight the competition and how donations can help. There is also advertising potential on MeetUp groups, Facebook, and LinkedIn.xviii

**Place;** Announcing the scavenger hunt will initially be through the existing progressive web application but with funding and/or volunteer time, a native app may become available in the future and be more user friendly to Millennials looking to connect with friends on Instagram and other social media apps.xix

There are currently multiple websites that offer to create historical tour native applications for historical societies. One example is MYToursApp.com. The webpage states: “Turn your walks, trails, museum tours, and audio guides into mobile apps”.xx

**Price;** A free scavenger hunt is best but include a Progressive Web Application with an online link to donate to the Historical Society. If a Native App is created, an application to donate should be included.
Article Footnotes


