Minnesota Zoo Proposed 2024 Content Plan
How to be the San Diego Zoo of engagement?

Intro:

With the advent of new technology like AI, the world is influx again. Technology is rapidly changing. Change leads to opportunity for those with the ability to take it. Anybody can be in the top 15 Zoos of America. Anybody can jump their message ahead in the busy minds of Minnesotans. My plan is to use technology to seize this opportunity and make the MN Zoo the foremost zoo in the world and the greatest enactor of change in Minnesota. With the creation of the Treetop Trail, I strongly believe this goal is now closer than ever. It will take a forward-thinking Marketing Director to educate the world and bring this vision to life.

How do we increase our audience, engage to inspire, and increase revenue while we are at it? By utilizing technology to spread our message. We need to be where our target market is. If we want to continue to grow and flourish for decades to come, we need to be a conservation leader in the digital space.

Why? What are we trying to accomplish?

By being strategic with our content, we control the process. All forms of media are driving towards one of three things:
  - Increasing Zoo Attendance
  - Donation
  - A Conservation Action
If not, then we need to ask: is it worth our time?

Josiah's Big Three Initiatives:
These are three big initiatives that I am excited about. These are ideas that I can easily execute using my technology background. The goal is to accomplish these powerful tools, while still maintaining what has made the zoo successful so far like Press Releases, Email Marketing, and Instagram. The goal is to maintain successful levels on those channels (or better). To be clear, these three ideas are only suggestions. They are subject to change based on direction from the leadership team.

Mobile App/New Customer Portal:
Disney is a pioneer of the mobile app, but I think we can do it better. Basically, we can create a portal that is used for existing guests using new technology. The site would have free accounts and member accounts. See below for specific ideas on what we could do with this application. Just fyi, one application can be used both as a website and mobile app, which saves a lot in development cost.
  - Like the MN Twins, we could potentially require the app for tickets. This would lead to everyone benefiting from the rest of the ideas below. We would need a big QR code sign at the entrance for easy download.
  - We could remove a lot of content from the website that can be added to the portal. It would allow us to simplify the website, making it laser focused on increasing attendance. Ex: website is

to get people to go to the Zoo. The new portal is for engaging guests and providing content for them.

- Allow us to upsell the member experience right from the app.
    - When a non-member buys tickets, a pop up says: for just xx dollars more you can be a member and get these perks…
    - Or if they are a member, donate more or upgrade to a Family Fun Pack for $10 more.
- We could have member-only live streams of animals. In my opinion, offering live streams for free devalues them. The app allows us to control who has access to them easier.
- Digital Map that uses Geo-location tracking to have live updates, including: "you are here."
- Special app only discounts.
    - If the store ever adds ecommerce capabilities, we could host it right within the website. Ex: buy swag before you go!
        - Offer Member Only Swag.
- Push notification Marketing.
    - Kid's birthdays are a big deal. We can make it an extra special visit for them. Ex: Free ice cream treat, but only redeemed through the app.
- ==Combining Push notifications and Bluetooth Beacon technology means we can push information to their device as they walk around the zoo. This is the golden ticket idea.== Basically, we plant little Bluetooth devices around the zoo that interact with any apps that come in range. Ideas:
    - Entrance area beacon: "Here is your ticket". Again, make sure to upsell to get the goodie package.
    - Gift shop area:
        - "Reminder, you get 10% discount".
        - Special spin wheel to get a bigger discount. Spin the wheel! Once per visit.
    - Leaving zoo: NPS Message: "Thanks for visiting, how likely are you to refer us to friends and family members".
    - Exhibit information given to you as you pass an exhibit. It also means we can track if people are reading our content! Bonus: much easier to update than physical signage!
    - "Complete 3 of 5 Zoo chosen engagement experiences to get a special discount or free prize". In my opinion, it's a small price to pay for engagement and knowing that they interacted throughout the zoo. We can use these numbers to leverage grants or increased donations. The best part is that we set what those engagement experiences are! We control what Conservation project we are pushing on a regular basis. *What's the big push of the month?*
        - Zookeeper turns on beacon during Zookeeper talks. App checks off automatically that you attended a Zookeeper talk.

Website:
- To be honest, there are only minor changes I want to make to the site. Overall, it's <u>very</u> good. I love the content that's on it. My goal is to make it simpler, easier to use, and have one theme across the whole site.
- One of the things I have learned from the photography industry is that beautiful imagery sells experiences. Our website is the vessel we can use to capture the beauty of the Minnesota Zoo. A reference of an amazing website is Amy Ritter Cowen's old company. Possibly, the work of Amy

herself, the Navy Pier website is a beautiful spectacle that sells the experience. I would like to do the same with the MN Zoo website.

- o https://navypier.org/

Extra Point: Investigational Email Marketing for larger campaigns:
1.) Create different tags to subset our database. Ex: Father, Mother, Family, Senior, etc
2.) Create different emails for each major tag with content specialized for them.
   a. Especially include themes that are important to them. Ex: Family, Loneliness, End of Life, School, Grandkids, etc. The more specific we can be, the better. Find the right "Why" message that inspires that subset to action.
      i. According to a study by Northwestern Media and their radio station KTIS, the vast majority of their listeners did not respond to calls to help someone else. They were more responsive to messages that mentioned how it benefited them. A sobering reminder that humans are inherently selfish. They can be inspired to help others, but even more so when there is some perceived value to themselves. We can help better accomplish this with specific targeted messages.
   b. Use AI Templates to help quickly create variations. Work smarter not harder.
3.) Test email subject lines and content on 5% of the database. Review data and see which works best. Then send the best performers to the rest of the database.
4.) Use data and analytics to review.

Digital Content:
By strategically designing our long content to have memorable moments, we can utilize one piece of content through all our digital channels. Work smarter, not harder.
1.) Create long form content:
   a. Interviews
   b. Podcasts
   c. Expert talks
   d. Zookeeper talking into a camera.
2.) Clip it up into short form videos. Find the best moments!
3.) Make the audio into a podcast.
4.) Take nuggets and turn it into text for Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and Facebook.
   a. Best text styles: List form or How-to

2024 highest engagement for digital format across the big six social media platforms:

- Short Form: 31%
- Long Form: 15%
- Interviews, Podcasts, Expert Talks: 13%
- Live Videos: 12%
- Memes: 10%
- User Generated Content: 10%
- Other: 6%

Best recommended platforms for 2024 Digital Content:

Instagram, YouTube, ~~Tik Tok~~, Facebook, LinkedIn

How? *"Work smarter not harder."*

Tips for Digital Content:

- **Don't do content for contents sake. Always have a purpose.**
- You don't have to spend a lot of money to create the perfect type of content.
- Focus on content quality, not necessarily video quality.
- Focus on the message we are trying to convey.
- Convey it in the shortest amount of time.
- Make it punchy, hook-em.
- Have captions.
- Create a clear plan for each video so it can be split into parts easier.
- People are inherently selfish people. *How does this affect me?*
- Use Canva to create YouTube thumbnails.
- Give Press/Media easy videos to share. Drive everything to our social media not theirs.
- Create multiple YouTube Channels for YouTube Algorithm. Also, allows some channels to have ads vs some with no ads. Ex: MN Zoo - Clips, MN Zoo - Motivational, MN Zoo - Conservation, MN Zoo – Peace, MN Zoo – Story Time
- The average person has short attention span.
- Use analytics to track which social media sites are generating the best conversions.
- Sponsors are a great revenue source.
- Influencers… are <u>really</u> important. This includes marketing to corporations as well! Everyone has someone we look up to.
- Humanize the animals. Use their names!
- Algorithm loves consistently
  o Schedule consistently with similar types of content for similar types of people

Top 25 Qualities of a Great piece of Content

- ❖ Talk about something new.
- ❖ Get to the point quickly.
- ❖ Incorporate story telling.
- ❖ Write in a conversational tone with words like *you and I*
- ❖ Use multi-media/visuals.
- ❖ Data driven.
- ❖ Actionable.
- ❖ Easy to understand.
- ❖ Need to flow well/simple.
- ❖ Good organization.
- ❖ Scannable (with your eyes) for text based.

- ❖ Highlight benefits > all about conversion.
- ❖ Incurs a desire to action.
- ❖ Write about a specific persona. Shouldn't appeal to everyone, should appeal to our ideal consumer.
- ❖ Continue to refresh and update: No one wants to read/watch 3-year-old content, keep everything fresh and updated. Take an old article and update statistics, etc.
- ❖ Optimize content for social sharing. Easy to share with media as well.
- ❖ Be Original.
- ❖ Written for *5th graders*. Don't use vocabulary for a Harvard grad.
- ❖ Contains a conclusion.
- ❖ Accurate/Fact check.
- ❖ Exceeds readers expectations.
- ❖ Lifts people up. Don't be too negative.
- ❖ Short and concise paragraphs. Easier to read and digest. People will consume more.
- ❖ Great hook/headline/thumbnails.
- ❖ Cite your sources.

Example Hooks:

Experience it yourself!
- ▪ San Diego's Hook: "Every visit goes a long way"
Remember! Support your local zoo by leaving a like, comment, and subscribing.

Potential Ideas:

- ▪ Invite Mom Social influencers for behind-the-scenes tours with their kids.
    - ○ Ex: Pinch of Yum Blog: Pinchofyum.com

- ▪ "Another beautiful day at MN Zoo" series.
- ▪ Story Time at the Zoo
- ▪ Educational Content designed for Parents to share with their Kids. Create our own influencer/mascot. Zara the Zookeeper. Pudgy the Panda.
- ▪ Partnership with local animal shelters. Use our influence for good.
- ▪ Epic Animal Videos.
- ▪ Peaceful Animal Videos. Ex: ASMR
- ▪ Focused Zookeeper Talk. Not just talking for talking sake.