Millennial Effects on Tourism and Branding in Rural Destinations

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DESTINATIONS

by
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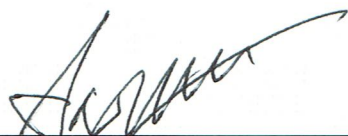A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of
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Dedicated to the town of St. Francisville and its community for teaching me the meaning of "It takes a village."

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ABSTRACT

Millennial Effects of Tourism and Branding in Rural Destinations
(under the direction of Dr. Robert Magee)

Research reveals that Millennials are becoming one of the leading markets for tourism and travel industries. Because of this, tourism destinations have been forced to examine their current marketing strategies in order to appeal to this market. The purpose of this study is to examine the most effective marketing strategies for rural tourism destinations to reach the target market of Millennials. This thesis identifies small town destinations as a facet of the tourism industry and effects of the market on branding and marketing a destination. It further analyzes the current marketing strategies used by rural destinations to remain competitive in the industry.

St. Francisville, Louisiana, was chosen as a rural tourism destination to develop an integrated marketing communications campaign targeting Millennials to increase awareness, encourage visits, and grow its digital media presence. The methodology used to reach insights about the target market and the branding of rural tourism destinations includes secondary and primary research that aided in the understanding of the effectiveness of communication strategies. In-depth interviews were conducted with members of the tourist commission in St. Francisville.

This study identified elements of creating a competitive advantage for rural destinations and factors of travel and purchase decisions for Millennials. Insights were gained on the importance of creating marketing campaigns based on the market of the

consumer. From these insights, an integrated marketing campaign for a rural destination was created.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of time, learning more about the people and places by which we are surrounded has an impact on us as individuals, as well as the society in which we live. In our society today, the travel and tourism industries play a large role in our cultural and economic development. Tourism, by definition, is the commercial organization and operation of vacations and visits to places of interest, but at its core, has much larger effects (Merriam-Webster). Places have an effect on our existence, shown when it was determined that "to exist at all…is to have a place – to be implaced…To 'be' is to be in place…" (Jepson and Sharpley 1162). Not only is it important to our existence to have a sense of place, it is important to understand those places around us and the people in them. This is accomplished through the art of traveling and tourism.

The goal of tourism is to provide long-term protection and integrated management of natural and cultural resources (Lane and Kastenholz 1149). Tourism plays a key role in many aspects of a destination including the culture, community, history, environment, and economy. This is an important industry worldwide that generates earnings, creates jobs, and contributes to tax revenue. The contribution of travel and tourism to the world GDP was $2,228.8 billion in 2015, and leisure travel spending generated 76.6% of the direct travel and tourism GDP (Pentescu 1).

When the term tourism is used, one may think of destinations such as bustling New York City, the white, sandy beaches of Florida, and numerous ski resorts in

Colorado. One would not always automatically associate tourism with a small town like St. Francisville, Louisiana. Places such as this one are not often considered "destinations," yet their economies and activities are dependent on the industry of tourism and travelers. This branch of tourism is called rural tourism, focusing on small towns and rural destinations that are not city hubs full of people and activity (Lane and Kastenholz 1133). Tourism for rural destinations is primarily targets the market of Baby Boomers; however, the Millennial generation is growing into one of the largest segments of travelers and tourists.

This research seeks to review marketing strategies used by destinations for travel and tourism, specifically in rural destinations. These marketing strategies include the exploration of destination branding, digital media marketing, traditional advertising, elements that make a destination marketable, and current tourism campaigns and practices. The research also seeks to identify specific target audiences for destination marketing and tourism to bring in the most visitors, focusing specifically on the Millennial generation and their draw to travel. The research identifies feeder markets and the places from which tourists travel to a destination. The Millennial generation was examined as the target audience, because it is expected to become the largest group of travelers by the year 2020 (Santos et al. 654). Millennials also spend more than $286 billion annually for travel and tourism (Molinillo et al. 118).

The researcher is from the rural town of St. Francisville, Louisiana, which has the potential to be a popular destination with a growing tourism industry, being a scenic, historic, and cultural destination. Working on an integrated marketing communications campaign for the St. Francisville, the researcher identified common elements in a rural

tourism destination to make it marketable. The researcher was also able to recognize

habits of Millennials in relation to travel, including elements within a destination, social

and digital media, and purchase decision habits.

Chapter 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Part 1: Small Town Destinations and Travel

Background

History of Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is coined as an alternative form of tourism, supported by a sense of rural place taking many forms. Elements of rural tourism, versus touring larger cities, are physical attributes like open space, ability to engage in outdoor activities and nature, and relaxation and escapism from the busier world. Rural tourism relates more strongly with emotional experiences and strong attachment with destinations, based on the emotional appeal of the places (Jepson and Sharpley 29).

Rural tourism in developed regions such as North America and Europe began as early as the late Nineteenth Century. This development in tourism was based on the expansion of transportation such as railroads into rural areas and the compelling "romantic rural landscape" these destinations offered (Lane and Kastenholz 1134). Rural tourism, however, did not evolve into what it is today until the 1970s. During this period the developed world offered policy that focused on rural regeneration and conservation. This policy and the market provided an alternative to the post World War II popular destinations of beaches and resorts. The growing transportation industry with increased car ownership made visits to rural destinations more feasible than ever before. Rural

communities saw this as an opportunity for regeneration, growth, and development based on the policy and practical transportation options to the areas.

Before rural tourism, destinations were based on property development, such as resorts, but this alternative form of tourism in less populated areas moved toward a basis of recycling existing properties and historic and cultural elements into tourist attractions. This did not require the same capital investment that destinations like resorts demanded and were grown on a much smaller scale and for a lower cost. At this time, rural tourism was a tool for economic growth to compensate for the increase of technology in agriculture and the jobs and income lost in rural areas because of it. It was a source of "diversification" for the economy of rural areas for economic sustainability (Lane and Kastenholz 1136). As rural tourism grew into the 1990s, the demand for this alternative traveling experience evolved from sight-seeing and appeal of the physical aspects of rural areas to experiences related more to business, such as activity, adventure, and experiential opportunities.

Modern Rural Tourism

Modern tourism is described in three phases: emergence, consolidated growth, and change and regeneration through innovation. The emergence of modern tourism was the beginning of rural tourism as an alternative to the declining agricultural sustainability in agrarian areas (Lane and Kastenholz 1136). The next phase, consolidated growth, is the phase that we are in. The emergence of rural tourism attracted skilled people from the cities to more rural areas, bringing in new and innovative skills to the areas. These people are known as "lifestyle entrepreneurs" who came in and helped to develop these rural societies (Lane and Kastenholz 1137).

This is where these destinations began the transition from rural tourism practices to more complex, business-based attractions to draw in tourists. These include activity tourism and cultural and heritage tourism. Activity tourism encompasses a variety of physical diversions highlighted in rural areas, such as walking, hiking, and cycling. Depending on specific areas and the terrain, activity tourism can include activities included in adventure tourism and sports tourism such as golf, skiing, and climbing. The less populated and developed terrain and landscape of rural communities offer activities exclusive to these destinations.

Cultural and heritage tourism are also unique to rural communities in the sense that they offer strong cultural experiences and rich history specific to a location. There are fewer chain stores, restaurants, and other businesses in rural areas, constructing experiences that cannot be recreated in other places. Food and wine tourism is included in this tourism niche, which is rapidly growing in rural destinations. The opportunity to visit places where personal contact with local people and interaction with residents of a place enforce the involvement of culture and heritage into the tourism experience.

The last phase of described rural tourism is change and regeneration through innovation, which is beginning in some places, but is to come in the future. This phase is based on increased competition and international marketing groups taking away tourists from national rural tourism groups. Lane and Kastenholz warn against these difficulties and suggest new and effective approaches to rural tourism and activities to combat this competition (1147).

Strategy

Branding Rural Tourism for Competitive Advantage

Before the increase of competition in the tourism sector, "rural tourism was, it was believed, safe from competition. No other form of tourism had the ability to provide guests with their own very personal experiences in unique, authentic places away from the tourist crowds. Rural tourism was the antithesis of mass tourism, and perfect for those who want to get away from cities, and away from standardized, impersonal service provision" (Lane and Kastenholz 1139). While this is still the basis of rural tourism, greater measures are needed to achieve this image for destinations. Larger cities and destinations are appealing to the same emotions as rural tourism and trying to offer similar personal experiences, so the demand for branding rural tourism is more important than ever before.

In a study to find an innovative solution for the preservation of cultural and architectural heritage in rural destinations, "nostalgia tourism" was deemed the solution (Pavlakovic et al. 115). The study defined nostalgia as a "sentiment of loss and displacement" geared toward the longing of a place and different time in the terms of tourism. This feeling of nostalgia makes the distinction between the modern world and the past, where the past evokes emotions of authenticity and ideological investment. "Consumer nostalgia" emerged in the 1970s in a time of high commercialization of the past, drawing consumers to tap into nostalgic feelings and longing for a different time (Pavlakovic et al. 117).

Rural destinations have the ability to build on this feeling of nostalgia to create a distinct brand that stimulates the same emotions. To commercialize nostalgia,

"recollections of the most intimate sort could be evoked simultaneously in many by mere reinvention by culture industries and marketing" (Pavlakovic et al. 118). Rural destinations are able to offer unique individual experiences to create their brand based on the the history, culture, architecture, heritage, and activities offered.

Rural destinations also offer the advantage of personal connection and connectivity with the local community. Interpersonal relationships between the self and others is a value adding quality when traveling (Jepson and Sharpley 12). Relationships give a sense of personal attachment that connect one to a certain destination. Since rural communities have a smaller population and the people are more connected to one another in the community than in larger destinations, tourists are able to connect with the local community more easily. Rural destinations offer many personal interaction touchpoints for tourists where they are able to connect with the community on a local level, especially in restaurants and small businesses unique to a destination. This gives them the opportunity to meet community members in their elements.

Destination Image and Mass Media

The brand identity of a place is the image of that place and the construction of the destination as a product that can be marketed (Runyan 330). The image of a place is important, as it paints a picture of the destination that influences the consumer's attitudes and beliefs about a place. This serves as a form of competitive advantage, setting destinations apart from one another and giving them distinct positions in the tourism market.

Destination image is defined as "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination" (Dan et al. 860). This is important to a destination because it

influences a decision to travel to a location and determines preconceived perceptions of a place before visiting. This destination image can be achieved through mass media and promotional materials. One of the most influential sources of opinions and perceptions is mass media to which people are exposed to on a daily basis (Dan et al. 861). Mass media platforms encompass all media that is broadcast to a wide range of people--including, but not limited to, radio, television, Internet, newspapers, magazines, and other print media (Lystad and Stone 356). For destinations, these media outlets are used to advocate on behalf of the destination for potential tourists. Creating a destination image is pivotal for these destinations, especially rural destinations, to put these places on the radar of travelers in search of places to visit. Websites of destinations are an important form of mass media and serve as a personality shot of the city or town. They show viewers what the place offers as a tourist destination. Mass media essentially sells a destination as it would sell a product.

The more frequent exposure a destination has in the media, the more likely it is to be considered as a place to travel. (Dan et al. 864). Through different media outlets, promotions of a place can reach the consumer through multiple different touchpoints, gaining awareness in the mind of the consumer. A consumer's subconscious awareness is directly connected to the assimilation of positive, neutral, and negative information about a place through the news and media (Dan et al. 860). Therefore, it is important for a place to be aware of its presence in the media as a promotion of what it has to offer as a tourist destination.

One-Way Communication Versus Two-Way Communication

Mass media play a large role in the image of a destination--both in one-way communication methods and two-way communication methods in the public relations realm. One-way communication includes advertising strategies in which the sender transmits a message to the target audience but does not receive a response (Naumovska and Blazeska 175). Examples include commercials, radio advertisements, flyers, print advertisements, and magazine articles. Two-way communication is a more personalized and interactive form of communication with consumers in which the consumer is able to have a voice (Naumovska and Blazeska 179). Forms of two-way communication include social media and interactive websites. Two-way communication allows the producer of a brand, product, or service to gain valuable, candid insight from the consumers. Now, more than ever before, people are constantly connected through the Internet and social media, making engagement between brands and the consumer a more interactive experience.

Social media and interactive websites provide a competitive advantage for tourist destinations because the market for tourism values openness and trust, which is made available through the testimonies, comments, and opinions of other tourists (Clow and Donald 47). The brand or destination is also able to respond to comments, answer questions, and address complaints in two-way forms of communication. Social media has the advantage of making a personal relationship with the consumer, where the customer is able to comment, share with, and connect with a destination, the people in the destination, and other tourists (Naumovska and Blazeska 180). The market values

customer opinions and ideas being heard and recognized, so two-way communication satisfies this desire and creates a more positive connection with the brand (Muk 130).

Community Involvement

The image and connotation of brands are socially constructed and depend on culture; therefore, it is important to understand the perception and sense of a place in regard to its local residents (Campelo et al. 155). A place is based on the meanings and values to which it is attached, and these meanings and values are the things on which a destination image is based (Campelo et al. 154). The people who have the strongest connection with a place are the local residents, who ultimately can determine the sense of a place. A local community's involvement in knowledge, decision making, and empowerment concerning tourism are directly related to the sustainability of rural tourism development (Fong and Low 125). Community involvement in the realm of tourism is defined as "residents who are involved in sharing issues and knowledge about their lives and are involved in daily actions within their communities" (Fong and Low 127).

A strong sense of community involvement in tourism can be a competitive advantage for a destination because a community's influences on a destination and its actions and reactions to tourists influence the attitudes and perceptions of the place in the minds of tourists. Local residents are familiar with the attractions their city or town possesses and offers to visitors. Their knowledge of the culture, environment, history, and attractions of their area can be as the framework of the material used to attract tourists. A strong relationship between the tourism industry and residents of a destination is important to the success of the industry. Since tourists place value on experiences when

they travel, community involvement in creating and sharing these experiences is important (Campelo et al. 156).

Part 2: Millennials and Travel

Millennials as a Target Market

Senior citizens and Millennials are the two most relevant segments in the tourism industry today based on their large dimensions and interest in traveling (Santos et al. 659). Millennials for the purpose of this study are defined as those born between 1979 and 2000, making them the largest population segment in the United States in 2015 (Garikapati et al. 558). This research focuses primarily on the Millennial sector of tourists, because they are expected to be the largest market segment for tourism by 2020.

This is a distinct segment of the market defined by their description as digital natives and one of the groups most affected by the economy and a lower disposable income compared to previous generations. They also have the highest level of education compared to other generations. Millennials are described as less likely to value ownership and more likely to value a "purpose-driven life to impact society and make a better tomorrow" (Garikapati et al. 560).

Digital Natives

Millennials are determined to be "digital natives," meaning they were the first generation born during the information age, having access to technology such as the Internet, computers, phones, and constant connection almost since birth (Santos et al. 655). As a generation Millennials are savvy in technology for this reason and have access to information about almost everything at their fingertips. They go online for most information, including shopping, news, entertainment, and social networking. Being a

digital native connects Millennials not only with information, but with other people constantly.

The implications of Millennials being digital natives are directly related to the way businesses and services market to this generation. A study conducted over a three-year period surveying Millennials at a prominent southwest University in the United States determined the preferences of online advertising that are the most effective for drawing the attention of this generation (Smith 86). Online and digital advertising is the preferred method of relaying information to Millennials over traditional advertising methods. Graphics and aesthetically pleasing website layouts are the most attractive features online to Millennials and have the greatest website visits and retention. Personalization of advertising and the ability to personalize purchases and services is the second most effective method of obtaining customers from this generation (Smith 87). One-to-one messages and the option for interaction are also valued in communication channels for Millennials (Santos et al. 664).

Millennials respond to online marketing and are vocal in reviews of products and services online. They are also influenced by the opinions and recommendations of peers and deem these opinions more credible than traditional advertising. When writing reviews, Millennials are more strongly influenced by their peers that will read the reviews than the producer of the product or service and write them specifically for that purpose. Because of a strong online presence from Millennials, digital marketing is an effective method of communicating with this generation, but it has to be done in an appealing manner for results.

Purchase Habits

When making a purchase, Millennials, being a generation interested in authentic and unique experiences, prioritize experiences and travel over material belongings (Pentescu 2). Millennials value the experience associated with the brand, product, or service they are purchasing more than the brand, product, or service itself. To achieve this an emotional approach of marketing should be used with a more subtle emphasis on the specific characteristics of the brand, product, or service.

Another distinct quality of Millennials is their desire for instant gratification. Since they are surrounded by technology that provides information, entertainment, and communication instantly, they expect the same in other areas of life, including gratification from purchasing products and services, which is a contributing factor when making a purchase (DiGristina 3).

Millennials, having access to wide ranges of information, explore and weigh many different options before making a purchase decision. The Internet allows the search and comparison of products, services, and brands, as well as the ability to monitor changes such as price, value, and quality before making a purchase. This segment of the market values a diversity of options and the ability to make a choice (Santos et al. 655).

Experiential Marketing

In the marketing field, "experience" is described as something that involves a personal occurrence with emotional significance evoked by a product, service, or brand (Hwai-Shuh and Wei-Hsun 59). Experiential marketing "is about taking the essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical, interactive experiences that reinforce it" (Hwai-Shuh and Wei-Hsun 59). Instead of simply selling a service,

experiential marketing of a service would sell memorable events and experiences associated with the service that relate to the consumer in a personal way. The goal of experiential marketing is to not sell a product or service, but to sell customers experiences that add value to their life.

Millennials, more than any other generation, seek authenticity after growing up in a digital world where there is little distinction between the virtual and reality (DiGristina 3). Experiential marketing is a way to create this authenticity for the consumer through personal experiences relating to a brand, product, or service. This type of marketing creates a platform for real engagement with the consumer to build a deeper relationship and create experiences for and with the customer. Meaningful participation with a brand is an important component when making purchase decisions, especially for the Millennial generation (Pentescu 4).

Millennials feel purposeful in their travel when they are able to find something new and different. 78% of Millennials prefer to learn something new when traveling, while 70% expect destinations to offer "immersive experiences that are interactive and hands on" (Lee 10). There is a growing interest in discovery and uncovering these authentic experiences within destinations (Lane and Kastenholz 1139). This sense of discovery leads to the feeling of purpose in a traveler.

For rural destinations, this experiential marketing tactic is a competitive advantage because of the personalization and authenticity automatically associated with small towns. More than other destinations, rural destinations are able to offer connections with locals in the areas to create an experience to accompany the brands, products, and services offered by the areas. Restaurants, businesses, retailers, and outdoor activities in

rural destinations offer a story and background that are easily accessible through local residents. Small towns offer narratives that provide an experience (Pavlakovic et al. 115).

Influences

With technology and mass media at an all-time high, Millennials are surrounded with advertisements, marketing, and connectivity at all times, so much so that they begin to tune out these strategies (Pentescu 2). There are countless outside influences on Millennials; therefore, the influences compete to have the greatest impact on the consumer. Since Millennials are becoming accustomed to marketing strategies for brands, products, services, and destinations, these tactics are losing credibility. Instead of relying on information coming directly from a brand, Millennials look to their peers for opinions and feedback on a brand. Since this generation places great importance on trust and authenticity, the information received from other consumers is regarded more highly than information coming directly from a brand (Muk 131). Tourists feel the need to know what their experience with a destination will be like before making travel decisions to reduce uncertainty and create an expectation of their experience, and this can be done through interaction with reliable sources such as other tourists who have visited the destination (Živković et al. 759).

Many destinations rely on social media and user generated content as a means of marketing. Based on a study done on the impact of social media on tourism, 76% of travelers post vacation photos on social media and 40% post activity and attraction reviews, while over 90% of consumers reported to trust recommendations from friends (Živković et al. 760). Sources of influence regarding travel and tourism include friends

that are connected on social media, bloggers, and social media influencers, who are esteemed social media presences with large followings (Živković et al. 760).

Social Media

Millennials, through their constant connectivity, are in a habit of sharing (Santos et al. 663). This generation is more connected through social media than any other generation has been. Six types of social media have been identified, including social networking websites like Facebook and Twitter, blogs, content communities like YouTube and Flickr, collaborative projects like Wikipedia, virtual social worlds like Second Life, and virtual game worlds like World of Warcraft (Živković et al. 760). Through their connection and sharing on social media platforms, Millennials have created an online community where they engage in marketing discussions including product reviews, consumer complaints, and brand advocacy (Muk 127). In order to be relevant to the digital native generation and create a presence in their online community, a brand's content must be relevant, use an emotional approach, and highlight entertainment (Santos et al. 663).

For Millennials, the opinions and approval of other Millennials are driving factors in purchase and travel habits, so a destination gaining a social media presence with Millennials is important and places the brand at a competitive advantage. Brands can also connect consumers through their brand pages on social media, which can impact their travel and purchase intentions. There are feelings of conformity pressure and the need to feel socially connected through social media, and Millennials will form opinions of brands based on these feelings and the habits of other Millennials (Muk 131).

Social media also encourage Millennials' desire for instant gratification. Since social media is updated constantly and provides the ability to constantly be connected, social media satisfies this need with its real time information (Pentescu 2). The ability for a brand to interact instantaneously with the consumer through comments, likes, and shares on social media gives a personal connection with the consumer.

Travel Patterns

Millennials are passionate about collecting information, learning, and having new experiences, making them more prone to travel than previous generations (Pentescu 2). Since it is more important to Millennials, they are willing to prioritize time and money towards travel than on other purchases. Millennials make up $200 to $300 billion in the travel industry annually (Pentescu 3). They also want to gain value from their travels by learning something new or saving money. Millennials check an average of ten sources before making a travel purchase or decision (Pentescu 2).

Millennials are traveling more often than other generations, at an average of 4.7 times per year for business and 4.2 times per year for leisure (Pentescu 2). When they travel, they are exploring travel options and booking over the Internet. Since Millennials find exploring many options and value making informed decisions, they are also inclined to use travel agents more than other generations.

Millennials are drawn to locations to travel where they can be immersed in the culture and way of life of the destination. They consider themselves "travelers" rather than "tourists" and want to have a local, personalized experience in a place (Santos et al. 663). Relationship building and getting connected with locals and their stories is another travel pattern of this generation. Destinations where Millennials are able to build

relationships with local residents and get to know the place on a deeper, more personal

level than a conventional tourist are more appealing to this generation (Pentescu 3).

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

Because Millennials value travel and experiences and are willing to spend money in the travel and tourism industry, it is important for destinations, especially rural ones, to market specifically to Millennials in order to attract more visitors. Millennials are considered digital natives, are attracted to experiential marketing, prioritize experiences over material things, are encouraged by instant gratification, and are influenced by their peers through social media. Therefore, it is crucial that destinations create a brand and marketing plan catered to these values. Millennials travel to a place to discover authentic experiences and learn new things. Rural destinations are able to offer these experiences of discovery through their unique attractions, so the marketing of these attractions is determinate of whether or not a tourist chooses the destination. The campaign developed for the rural destination of St. Francisville, Louisiana, is based on these insights.

The purpose of this study is to examine tourism practices and insights of how to best brand and market a destination to a target audience and to create an integrated marketing campaign based on this information. The study will also examine how a destination has positioned itself in the past to different target audiences and compare the tactics to the created campaign based on the target market, digital media, and change in the industry.

St. Francisville, located in West Feliciana Parish, was chosen as the destination to promote based on the personal connection with the researcher. The researcher grew up in

St. Francisville and realized the potential of the town as a tourist attraction for the Millennial generation. Previously, St. Francisville has only been marketed as a tourist destination for Baby Boomers and young families, despite its close proximity to feeder markets where large numbers of Millennials reside. The town has gone through brand and marketing changes in the past and lacks consistency in branding and advertising across media channels. Since Millennials tune in to media outlets and digital advertising, St. Francisville lacks an identity in the minds of the target market. This campaign was created with the purpose of appealing to Millennials and encouraging them to visit St. Francisville, Louisiana. This work was conducted as volunteer work, but it was done in hopes of giving St. Francisville insight into potential markets not yet explored by the tourism industry.

The researcher worked on a marketing campaign in the Integrated Marketing Communications capstone class (IMC 455) for the small Mississippi town, New Albany, where the target market was the Millennial generation. Through this research, insights were gained about the target market and positioning a rural place as a tourist destination. Further investigation was conducted on the tourism industry, history of modern tourism and its practices, branding a destination, and the target market.

The researcher also worked closely with residents of St. Francisville to gather primary research and information concerning tourism in the town. In-depth interviews were conducted with members of the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission in St. Francisville to discuss tourism promotion strategies, destination branding, attractions to the town, target markets, and future goals (See Appendix). The mission statement of the

West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission is "to market and maintain tourism as a strong economic base for West Feliciana Parish."

After researching the effective marketing tactics for the promotion of a rural destination and characteristics of the target market, goals were established to create an integrated marketing campaign to promote St. Francisville. These goals include an increased awareness of St. Francisville as a destination for Millennials, to encourage Millennial visits to St. Francisville, and to create a greater social media presence for the town through shared experiences from Millennials.

Chapter 3

CAMPAIGN FOR ST. FRANCISVILLE, LA

Execution Plan

Concept: The concept of this campaign is to increase brand awareness of St. Francisville to the target audience of Millennials coming from the feeder markets of Baton Rouge, Zachary, and New Roads. The idea behind this is to incorporate a marketing campaign through tourism in St. Francisville that specifically targets Millennials, because that is a demographic that has not been included in current marketing strategies. It aims to incorporate digital media and connect with Millennials on platforms and through values that appeal to the generation.

Objective: The objectives of this campaign are to increase brand awareness of St. Francisville as a destination, encourage visits, and create a larger social media presence through shared experiences to the Millennial market.

Strategy: The strategy is to appeal to the values of Millennials and what they find important when traveling to create a campaign that incorporates these elements. It also aims to improve social and digital media to attract Millennials to the destination brand of St. Francisville.

Campaign Elements: The four aspects of the campaign created through this study are information, insights, solutions, and implementation. At the beginning of the process, information was collected through primary and secondary sources on the destination of St. Francisville and the target market of Millennials. From the information gathered came

insights about the destination and target market on which the campaign would be designed. Based on the insights gathered and ways in which the target market connected with the destination, solutions were created that led the way these ideas will be implemented in the destination to drive the campaign.

Information: Information was gathered about the destination, St. Francisville, and the target market, Millennials. Through secondary research of websites and resources available concerning St. Francisville, prior knowledge from the researcher living in St. Francisville for 18 years, and in-depth interviews with residents of the town involved in tourism, knowledge was gained about the events, attractions, accommodations, shopping, dining, scenery, travel guidelines, and marketing strategies in the town. Research was conducted on branding and marketing tactics for tourism in rural destinations. There was also an analysis of the tourism industry, including Strength/Weakness/Opportunity/Threat (SWOT) analyses of surrounding areas and competitors in the industry. In addition, information was collected on Millennials as a target market for tourism, including their travel patterns, influences, and characteristics.

Insights: From the information collected, insights were revealed that connected the target market to the destination. Millennials as travelers want to learn something new and discover unique culture and experiences local to a place, while St. Francisville offers many activities, restaurants, and shops that are exclusive to the town. The target market is looking for new and different opportunities that appeal to their emotions, and St. Francisville offers a sense of exploration, feeling of nostalgia, and an "undiscovered" place to uncover for the traveler. In addition, Millennials enjoy sharing experiences and are influenced by their peers on digital media, while St. Francisville offers beautiful

scenery that is aesthetically pleasing for social media posts and being shared for marketing purposes. Lastly, the target market enjoys curated and customized experiences and trips, and the destination offers many different experiences for travelers including leisure, outdoor activities, shopping, dining, and history, allowing visitors a personal experience based on their interests.

Solutions: The insights were a catalyst into solutions for the campaign, which were based around the theme "discovery." To discover means to find (something or someone) unexpectedly or in the course of a search, and St. Francisville offers both emotional and physical aspects of this value. In the physical sense, one can explore the physical places offered in the destination, including plantation homes, outdoor experiences, and the downtown area. In an emotional sense, it is a place where one is able to escape from a busier lifestyle to discover oneself. There are no pretenses and one is able to come to be oneself. It gives tourists the opportunity to customize their experience based on their personal passions and desires. From this theme came the main message, "St. Francisville, A Place to Discover."

Implementation: The solutions led to the implementation portion of the campaign, which revolves around digital media--the most effective strategy to connect with the target market. It is also one of the biggest obstacles the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission is facing currently with their inconsistent digital media practices. The primary focus of the digital media revitalization for the brand of St. Francisville will be social media. Social media connects with the target audience and can be executed on a limited budget. The implementation of the digital revitalization for the campaign

incorporates six parts: an updated brand, feature stories, giveaways, event calendars, post rotations, and the implementation of a hashtag.

Decision Reasoning

Each aspect of the campaign created for the West Feliciana Tourist Commission to promote the town of St. Francisville to Millennials has a reason behind it. From the objectives and theme to main message and ideas for implementation, the opinions and information from the tourist commission and research done on tourism and Millennials as a target audience were the driving elements. All parts of the campaign specifically target Millennials in an attempt to create awareness of St. Francisville and encourage visits.

Target Audience

The target market for the campaign for the town of St. Francisville's tourism is Millennials between the ages of 18 and 25. The target is specifically those in surrounding areas of St. Francisville like Baton Rouge, Zachary, and New Roads. These feeder markets offer a large population of Millennials that are in close enough proximity for frequent visits. The largest number of visitors to St. Francisville come from areas within driving distance, and this group takes the least effort to respond to marketing tactics to implement action to visit.

The campaign will most specifically target Millennials in the Baton Rouge area based on the close proximity at 38 minutes away from St. Francisville. It is also home to Louisiana State University, which has a student population of over 30,000 Millennials. Other colleges such as Southern University and Baton Rouge Community College are located in Baton Rouge, creating a larger market. The feeder market of Zachary is a 25-

minute drive, while New Roads is 24 minutes away from St. Francisville. Most Millennials in these two markets are young professionals beginning careers.

The goal for this target age is to market St. Francisville as a retreat and an escape from a busy city and lifestyle. College students and young professionals of this generation idolize productivity and busyness, so the idea of a small town retreat with a relaxed connotation is enticing. It is also a quick retreat that can be made as a day or weekend trip, based on its close proximity to the feeder markets.

Millennials in our target market have little no opinion or attitude of St. Francisville based on the lack of marketing to this demographic (Walsh). The limited budget of the campaign is feasible to market to this target audience because most marketing tactics towards this demographic is through digital media, which can be produced for little or no cost.

<p align="center">**Brand**</p>

The brand of St. Francisville is portrayed to the outside world through the logo and tag line. The brand of St. Francisville through the outlet of tourism has been updated for this campaign. The logo and tag line for the town have been inconsistent and been through many changes in previous years. The previous official tagline was "Soothing for the Soul," but was deemed not effective by the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission. Currently the tagline is "We love it here," but a goal of the tourist commission is to change it again, because they feel it does not fit with the objective of attracting visitors.

(Current logo and tagline)

(Proposed logo and tagline)

The logo created for the campaign incorporates the John James Audubon Bridge, which is a bridge that connects St. Francisville to Pointe Coupee Parish across the Mississippi River. The iconic cable bridge stretches 1,583 feet across the Mississippi River, making it the longest cable-stayed span in the Western Hemisphere. This bridge was chosen to be part of the logo, first and foremost, because a bridge incorporates the ideas of discovery, travel, invitation, and a catalyst into a destination. The bridge was

built in 2015 and shows the way the community has moved forward in the past decade in technology and resources.

The new tag line created for the campaign is "St. Francisville...A Place to Discover," to implement the theme of discovery in St. Francisville, one element important to Millennials. This encourages the target audience to imagine their own version of St. Francisville and customize their experience to make it purposeful and individualized for the traveler. This tag line offers the idea of possibility and exploration. In addition, the message incorporates the ideas of sharing and connecting, which appeal to the target market. Using the phrase "A Place to Discover," the destination is extending an invitation to discover the town and be a part of the community and culture St. Francisville offers. The tag line links to the use of the Audubon Bridge in the logo through these elements.

As far as the logo design, the bridge is the primary graphic appeal. Its orange color is true to its color in person and attracts the attention of a consumer. Above the bridge, "St. Francisville, LA" is written in the typeface *The Bold Font*, which was chosen because it is simple and bold. The tag line "A Place to Discover" is featured in the typeface *Chipotle* underneath the bridge because it is whimsical and gives the connotation of discovery.

Digital Media

Updated Brand

The first step in improving the digital media presence for the St. Francisville brand is making all social media platforms consistent to promote the proposed logo, tag line, and overall brand for the campaign. Visit St. Francisville is active on Facebook and Instagram. Facebook is a social media site in which users create profiles that can be

updated with statuses, pictures, videos, and events. Brands can create pages that can be liked. Instagram is a social media platform where users follow one another and post updates of photos, to which captions can be added. The following images show the current Facebook and Instagram pages for *Visit St. Francisville*:


(Current Facebook page)
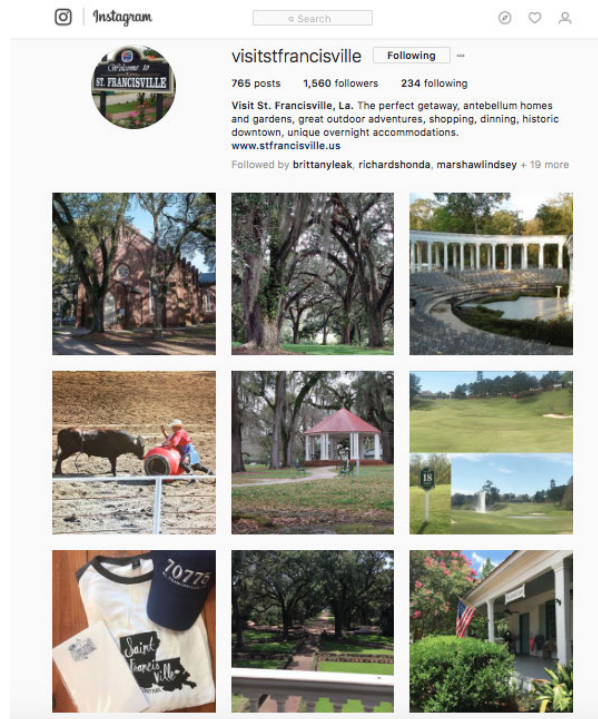
(Current Instagram page)

As seen on the current pages, both profile pictures are a photograph of a "Welcome to St. Francisville" sign. This is inconsistent with the brand identity of St. Francisville, since these profile pictures are the only places it is advertised. The Facebook cover photo has the phrase "Find yourself in St. Francisville/West Feliciana," which is a phrase and graphic not found anywhere besides the Facebook cover photo. As part of the digital media recommendation, the profile pictures on both social media platforms will be the proposed new logo for the town. The cover photo of the Facebook page will be a picture looking down an Oak tree alley at the iconic plantation home Rosedown. This is a picturesque image of St. Francisville that encompasses the history and culture appeal, outdoors, and beautiful scenery. A single image is as the cover photo is more engaging and less busy on the page.

(Recommended Facebook page)
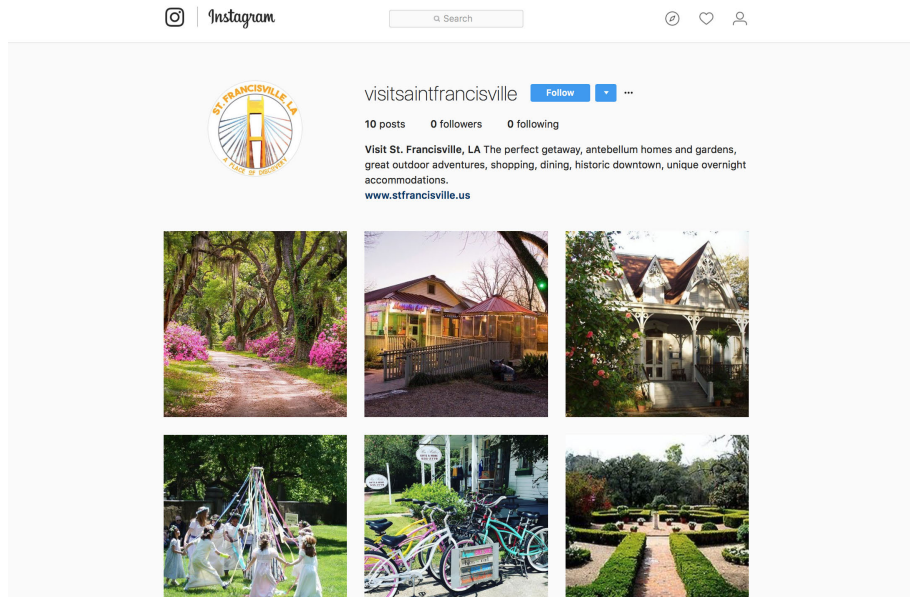
(Recommended Instagram page)

Digital Revitalization Strategies

There are five additional elements of social media strategies that will be focused on in the digital media revitalization. This are feature stories, giveaways, event calendars, post rotations, and the implementation of a hashtag. The first aspect of improving digital media for St. Francisville is through a series of feature stories on different members in the community. This is because connecting with the community and feeling a part of an authentic experience is important to the target audience. It is also important for the tourism industry for the community to be connected and invested in tourism efforts, and this strategy incorporates that interaction.

These feature stories will be short articles that focus on a particular member of the community involved in an aspect of tourism, called "Faces of St. Francisville." The articles will tell the story of the community member, while incorporating the tourism element that promotes St. Francisville. Feature stories will highlight business owners,

restaurant managers, and residents in charge of events and festivals, among other facets. For example, the former chairman of the Audubon Pilgrimage event could be portrayed as a town personality in a feature story. The story would connect the reader not only to the chairman as a person, who they would get to know on a personal level, but also to the event with which she is involved. These feature stories will be shared in social media posts monthly.
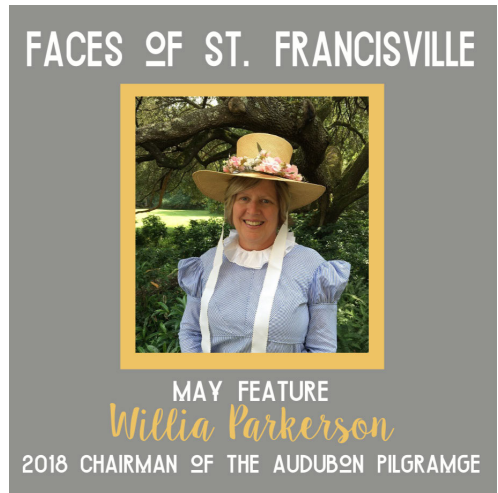
(Sample Feature Story Graphic)

Next, since instant gratification is valued by the target market of Millennials, giveaways will be promoted quarterly (four times a year) through social media. Local accommodations, businesses, restaurants, and activities will contribute elements to the giveaway packages. Each package would include lodging for a night or weekend getaway to St. Francisville, along with a gift from a shop, restaurant gift card to a local spot, and a deal at a local activity, like a pass to historical tours or a kayak rental. The giveaways entries will be based on following the social media pages for *Visit St. Francisville*, liking the original post, and the sharing of the post by the user. Since Millennials influence

other Millennials, the sharing and liking of social media gains publicity for tourism, while giving the consumer a chance for instant gratification.

(Sample Giveaway graphic)

Because there are a large number events in St. Francisville that do not receive the digital media attention needed to attract more visitors, a monthly event calendar post will be implemented on all forms of social media. A graphic will be made each month listing the events, dates, and descriptions for events occurring in the town, and will be posted on Facebook and Instagram. Event calendars will encourage visitors to discover special occasions offered by the destination that coincide with their personal interest and passions.

OCTOBER 2018

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Angola Prison Rodeo
8	9	10	11	12		14 Angola Prison Rodeo
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 Angola Prison Rodeo
22	23	24	25	26 Yellow Leaf Arts Festival	27 Yellow Leaf Arts Festival	28 Angola Prison Rodeo
29	30	31				

(Sample Event Calendar)

As far as consistent posts on social media, the current practice is that there will be one post a day on both Facebook and Instagram. There are different categories of posts, but currently there is no social media calendar or particular rotation for posts. In an effort to revamp the social media posts of *Visit St. Francisville,* this campaign proposes the implementation of a social media calendar that rotate posts of the following categories: history and culture, accommodations, shopping and dining, scenery photos, and outdoor activities. The posts will go on a rotation daily and follow the same schedule. This will provide consistency in posts highlighting different attractions of the destination that appeal to a wide market. In addition, posts will be made about special events occurring, the monthly event calendar, monthly feature stories, and quarterly giveaways.

Photos that accompany these posts will also be more consistent. Currently, there are photos posted on both Facebook and Instagram that are low-quality, blurry pictures, and the revitalization will transition to only high-quality photo posts. Another push will be to use photos that incorporate people, so that the consumer can picture themselves as being a part of the culture and local community.
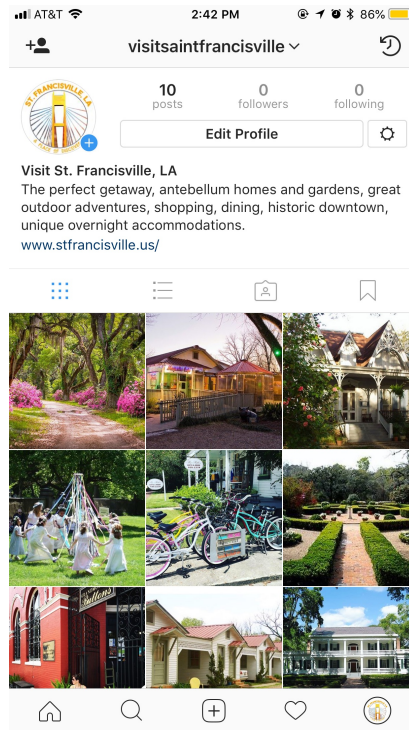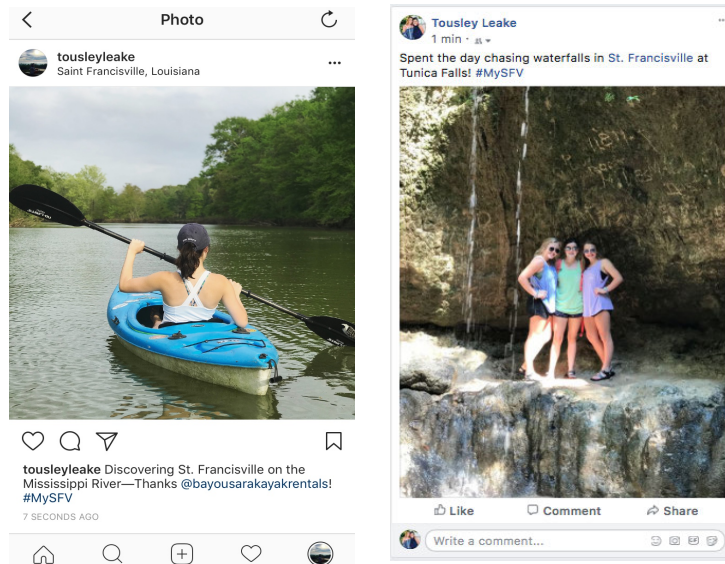
(Sample Instagram using Post Rotation)

There will be the implementation of a hashtag across all forms of social media. A hashtag is a label for content and can be used for others to search other content on that topic quickly. By using a hashtag in the promotion of St. Francisville, all posts that use the hashtag will be grouped together on social media sites to create a brand awareness and interest in the topic. The proposed hashtag is #MySFV, which stands for "My St. Francisville." The hashtag #MySFV incorporates the message "A place to discover," and invites visitors to discover their own St. Francisville and customize an experience that is personal to their individual interests and passions.

A hashtag will encourage two-way communication because the consumer will have a voice in the media. Instead of viewing media with information about St. Francisville, they can post content from their experience. A hashtag will allow them to interact with other visitors who have posted similar content. This will increase St.

Francisville's credibility as a destination. Those running social media for St. Francisville can interact with visitors that use this hashtag easily with likes, shares, and comments, creating a connection between the brand and the consumer.

(Sample posts using #MySFV)

Action Plan

The proposal for a short-term action plan is to develop social media platforms through the six-part digital revitalization. Implementation of these six initiatives will take place by the West Feliciana Tourist Commission volunteers for social media, who will use them as guidelines. The revitalization will help the campaign reach its objectives through social media. Volunteers will use the action steps laid out in the campaign to begin to implement these initiatives.

The proposal for a long-term action plan is for the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission to hire an employee that will spend full-time promoting the brand of St. Francisville on digital media. This employee will further develop the brand of St. Francisville, run all digital media platforms, and create content that will meet objectives

set by the campaign. This will relieve the responsibility of digital media from volunteers on the tourist commission and transfer it to a full-time, paid employee.

Evaluation

To evaluate the results of executing the proposed campaign, brand awareness, number of visits, and social media presence will be analyzed. To determine an increase in brand awareness in the minds of the target market, an attitudinal study will be conducted. Millennials in the Baton Rouge area will receive a survey concerning their behaviors and attitudes towards St. Francisville as a destination. The survey will be distributed at the beginning of the campaign and again after three months, six months, and one year of the campaign being implemented. Changes in the results of the survey will determine a change in brand awareness. The success of the objective to increase Millennial visits to St. Francisville will be determined through the measurement of event attendance by Millennials, the number of Millennial visitors to attractions, and the number of accommodations bookings. St. Francisville's social media presence will be evaluated by measuring social media engagement through the number of followers on Instagram and Facebook. It will also be determined by interactions on social media sites including the number of likes, shares, and comments.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to discover trends in the branding and marketing of rural destinations in the tourism industry, as well as trends in travel habits and purchase decisions of the Millennial generation. The information uncovered was used to create an integrated marketing communications campaign promoting the destination of St. Francisville, Louisiana, to the target market of Millennials. When creating the campaign for the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission, the researcher's goal was to brand the town of St. Francisville for competitive advantage in the tourism industry in the minds of the target market. Through this campaign, the researcher followed the process of creating a campaign from start to finish--from the information gathered and insights gained to solutions formulated and the implementation of those solutions through marketing strategies.

The main findings of the research showed that rural destinations are searching for competitive advantage in the tourism industry through destination image, mass media, implementation of two-way communication methods, and community involvement. Millennials, the target market, were found to be digital natives, rely on social media and mass media communication methods, feel the need for instant gratification and the discovery of new experiences, as well as are drawn to experiential marketing tactics. As the campaign for the destination was created, it was found that the motivation for the marketing techniques used throughout the campaign were dependent completely on the

habits, values, and perceptions of the target market. The destination image of St. Francisville was posed as one that will be appealing to Millennials. From the insights mined, the researcher looked to focus on the emotions of the target audience to create the campaign ideas, in which the proposed implementation methods were digital media, based on the habits of the consumer.

In conclusion, it was determined that the target audience and their habits as a consumer are the driving force for marketing campaigns. The purpose for any brand, destination, product, or service is driven by the consumer and their needs and wants in relation to what is being offered. The most important tactic in creating marketing campaigns is gaining insight into the minds of the consumer and how to market the desired brand, destination, product, or service in relation to those insights.

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APPENDIX

<u>Interview Questions:</u>

- Please state your name and today's date.
- Are you over 18 years old?
- Do you live in St. Francisville, Louisiana?
    - How long have you lived in St. Francisville?
    - Is this where you are originally from?
- As a resident, what is your perception of St. Francisville as a destination?
    - What are some of the qualities of St. Francisville that make it a desirable destination, in your opinion?
    - Any more?
- What is your role with tourism in St. Francisville, Louisiana?
    - How long have you been working with tourism in St. Francisville?
- As far as tourism goes, what is the current brand for St. Francisville as a destination?
    - How is it marketed?
    - Is there a tagline for St. Francisville's tourism?
    - What about a logo?
    - Who comes up with the brand for St. Francisville?
    - What are some examples of how St. Francisville has been marketed in the past?
        - Any more?
        - Has the town gone through any rebranding, or have the marketing tactics remained the same over time?
            - If so, what changed?
    - Are you familiar with the phrase "experiential marketing?"
        - If not…It is a phrase used in marketing products, brands, and destinations that "creates a meaningful experience for customers." Do you think St. Francisville does this in its marketing?
- What are the current target markets that St. Francisville is marketing to? (baby boomers, millennials, young families, etc.)
    - What steps are being taken to market to these targets?
        - Any other steps?

- Are there any tourism campaigns currently focused on specific targets?
  - Can you think of any others?
- Who are the primary tourists that visit St. Francisville?
  - Age, demographic, place they're from (average distance from St. Francisville)?
  - Do they come for day trips, weekends, or extended visits?
- What media outlets are being used to market St. Francisville currently?
  - Internet ads? Social Media? Print Ads? (in what publications?) Can you think of any others?
  - Does publicity remain in surrounding areas/within the state or market to other states as well?
  - Has St. Francisville ever used a social media influencer for marketing purposes?
- What aspects of St. Francisville are the most marketable, in your opinion?
  - What aspects of St. Francisville are used the most in the current marketing?
    - Food is determined important for travelers when making destination decisions. What does St. Francisville have to offer involving food for tourists?
      - Are there places with cocktails? Breakfast? Lunch? Dinner? Snacks?
- Are there any events in St. Francisville that would draw in tourists?
  - What are these events? (Ask about The Pilgrimage, Yellow Leaf Arts Festival, Walker Percy Weekend, Angola Prison Rodeo, Christmas in the Country, etc.)
    - Follow up with each event and the target market for the events.
  - How are these events advertised?
    - What media outlets are used?
    - How widespread are the marketing efforts for specific events?
- Has St. Francisville ever done a campaign to market specifically to millennials (specifically
- college-age and young professionals ages 18-26)?
  - Has the close proximity of LSU ever been discussed and the huge market of millennial travelers it could bring to St. Francisville?
  - Thoughts about LSU being so close—talk about Water Valley and Oxford and bringing in college students—making it a destination for outdoor activities, food, small town Southern charm, getting out of the hustle and bustle of Baton Rouge

- - What are your thoughts about bringing in the skills of LSU students for projects around St. Francisville?
- Would St. Francisville consider a campaign targeting millennials as tourists?
  - Why or why not?
- Thank you for your time.

CAMPAIGN BOOKLET:

For the West Feliciana Tourist Commission

A PLACE TO DISCOVER

Inviting Millennials to discover themselves in St. Francisville, LA

TOUSLEY LEAKE

Table of Contents

INFORMATION

The client is looking to grow its tourism and attract more visitors, specifically those of the Millennial generation.

Among Millennials, the goals are to increase awareness of St. Francisville as a destination, to encourage visits to St. Francisville, and to create a larger social media presence for the town through shared experiences from Millennials.

St. Francisville

The client is St. Francisville, Louisiana—a small Louisiana town known for its southern hospitality, breathtaking scenery, opportunities for exploration, and rich history.

Located forty minutes north of Baton Rouge, St. Francisville is set in a convenient location on the Mississippi River. It is also in close proximity to New Orleans and Lafayette. St. Francisville offers charming downtown and shops, outdoor activities, an opportunity to relax and rejuvenate, and rich culture and history.

A town with approximately a population of 1,700 people in the city limits and 15,00 in the parish limits, St. Francisville offers four main areas of interest involving tourism.[1] These are the downtown and business aspect, outdoor activities, residential and leisure appeal, and historical element.

St. Francisville offers a charming downtown with shops and restaurants unique to the town. It encompasses the charm of a small, Southern town and offers that experience to visitors.

The destination, located on the Mississippi River, is home to Tunica Falls hiking trails, the West Feliciana Parish Sports Park, and miles of beautiful biking routes.

St. Francisville offers an escape from the bustle of the outside world to unwind and relax with a slow way of life. It also offers a notable historical experience with numerous plantation homes, gardens, and annual festivals open to the public.

Photo: Town of St. Francisville Facebook

Industry Analysis

Photo: The Advocate

Photo: Louisiana Department of Tourism

An average of 46.7 million domestic and international people travel to the state of Louisiana annually. They spend $16.8 billion in their travels, and $1.04 billion of Louisiana's total state tax revenues are generated by travel and tourism activities in the state. The travel and tourism industry is the fourth highest employer in the state, employing 231,567 residents.[2]

The top three leisure activities for Louisiana domestic travelers are visiting friends and family, shopping, and fine dining. In the state, the food and beverage services generate the largest share of tourism-generated gross domestic product, followed closely by recreation activities and food and lodging. The top activities reported by travelers are dining, shopping, and sightseeing.[3]

The leading markets from which most visitors travel are within driving distance in the areas of Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The top destinations for tourism in Louisiana are the cities of New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles, Shreveport, Lafayette, and Alexandria.[4] These are all relatively large cities that draw visitors, but other regions and parishes capitalize on unique assets to their history and culture.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Millennials between the ages of 18 and 25 are the target market for the campaign. The target is specifically those Millennials in surrounding areas of St. Francisville like Baton Rouge, Zachary, and New Roads. These feeder markets offer a large population of Millennials who are in close enough proximity for frequent visits.

Millennials in Baton Rouge will be most specifically targeted based on the close proximity 38 minutes away. It is home to Louisiana State University, which has a student population of over 30,000 Millennials. Millennials in our market have little or no opinion or attitude of St. Francisville based on the lack of marketing to this demographic.[5]

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

The target market thinks that travel and experiences are important. They search for authentic experiences and purpose over material things and consider themselves "travelers" rather than "tourists."[6] Millennials prefer instant gratification.[7]

They are drawn to meaningful experiences within destinations of which they can connect and be a part, rather than observing. Millennials want to connect with the local community and residents and immerse themselves in the culture. This target seeks to learn new things and have different experiences when traveling.[8]

Millennials seek connection and credibility when making purchase decisions. They hold the opinions and values of their peers most highly and form opinions based on their friends' experiences and influence.[9]

INFLUENCES

Millennials have strong technological skills and a habit of sharing, especially on social media. Millennials are highly connected on multiple social media and digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and email, which are their largest influencers.[10]

They value instantaneous interaction with brands, products, and other people, and appreciate the ability to interact with brands on social media to form a personal connection.
Two-way communication where the destinations and brand can respond to the target market is preferred.[11] Millennials are highly active on cell phones, including text messages, email, applications, as well as the Internet through blogs and email.

Photo: The Next Evolution

Photo: Davis Pourciau
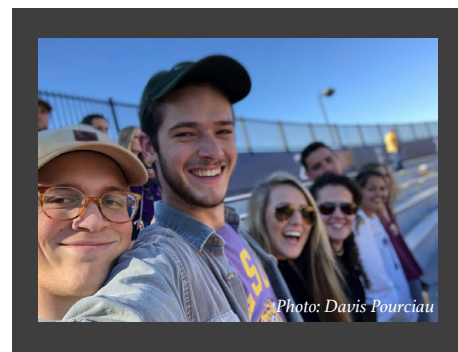
Consumer Profiles

Consumer 1: Laura Jones

Demographics	-Female -22 years old -Attends Louisiana State University -Pursuing a degree in Mass Communications -Occupation: Student
Psychographics	-Loves people and can strike up a conversation with anyone, never meets a stranger -Appreciates architecture and history -Involved in art and music culture
Habits	-Stays connected on social media with her friends and has a blog -Always encourages her friends to take spontaneous road trips and discover new things

Consumer 2: Henry Baker

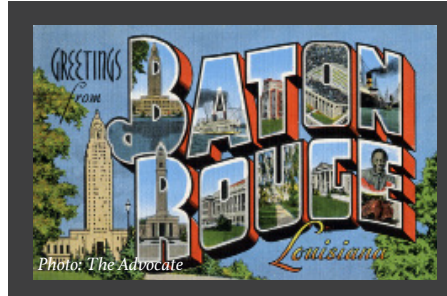|	
Demographics	-Male -24 years old -Attends Louisiana State University Law School -Pursuing a J.D. -Occupation: Law student
Psychographics	-Appreciates the outdoors and Southern culture -Always listening and observant of the world around him -Spontaneous and will go places on a whim
Habits	-Loves the outdoors and does not leave home without his hiking boots -Avid golfer -Wants to discover things that no one else has found

SWOT ANALYSIS OF COMPETITORS

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

SWOT

Baton Rouge

Photo: The Advocate

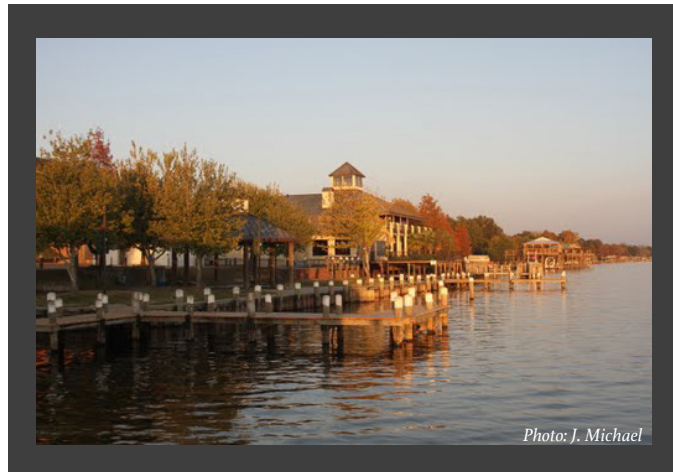| STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• State capital of Louisiana • Home of Louisiana State University, Southern University, and Baton Rouge Community College • Diverse attractions • Historical element: museums and plantation homes • Variety of shopping and dining experiences • Downtown area • Live music scene • Active bar and nightlife scene • Airport • Outdoor activities: golf courses, LSU lakes, sports complexes, skate park • Large amount and variety of accommodations • Festivals and events	• Traffic • Distance between tourist attractions and different areas within the city • Close proximity to New Orleans, which is a primary tourist destination
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Public's use of Online communication for choosing where to travel and travel information • Travel bloggers • Media coverage throughout the state and surrounding areas • Large variety of attractions to appeal to different visitors • Enough attractions for extended stays • Attractions that appeal to Millennial market	• Visitors looking for an escape and retreat • Population growth with lack of sustainable infrastructure • Expensive upkeep of historical landmarks

SWOT

Zachary

Photo: City of Zachary

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Golf courses: Beaver Creek, Copper Mill, Fennwood Hills Country Club • Historic district • Antiques at the Crossroads- 2 large antique markets with over 100 vendor booths • Close proximity to larger cities like Baton Rouge and New Orleans • Close proximity to Baton Rouge airport • Baseball park that hosts many tournaments and brings in people • Port Hudson State Historic Site: battlefield and cemetery • Regional Veterans Park • Variety of dining and shopping options	• No charming or iconic downtown area • Lack of scenery • No strong emphasis on tourism currently • Lack of diversity in overnight accommodations • Lack of photos on "Visit Zachary" website, lacks visual appeal • Low awareness of what to do within the city • Low social media and digital presence • No reputation as a tourist destination • Social media not used as a promotion tool
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Potential location for the East Baton Rouge Parish Zoo • Media coverage throughout the state and surrounding areas • Public's use of Online communication for choosing where to travel and travel information • Potential travelers from surrounding areas and cities	• Larger cities and towns in close proximity that offer more attractions • Limited funding for tourism • No historic element like surrounding areas

SWOT

New Roads

Photo: J. Michael

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Multiple festivals and events- especially the Harvest Festival • Historical context • Located on the Mississippi River • Charming downtown area on the river • Variety of authentic dining and shopping options • Community involved in tourism • Variety of overnight accommodations • Short distance between tourist attractions	• Tourism website difficult to navigate • Low social media and digital presence • No reputation as a tourist destination • Not enough attractions for extended visits • No tourism promotion on social media besides Facebook • Lack of diversity in visitors
OPPORTUNITIES	**THREATS**
• Media coverage throughout the state and surrounding areas • Recreational and leisure travelers • Escape and leisure opportunity from larger cities • Potential travelers from surrounding areas and cities	• Larger cities and towns in close proximity that offer more attractions • Limited funding for tourism • Lack of awareness of attractions within the city

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Interview with Laurie Walsh

Director of West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission, Employed by the St. Francisville Main Street Association

Laurie Walsh currently works for the town of St. Francisville and runs the "Main Street Program" for the town, which puts on events for the downtown area and promotes events through the historic district. She also serves as the director of the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission, which is run through the parish. The tourist commission promotes tourism and strives to improves its strategy to attract visitors. These two organizations are separate entities, one being run by the parish and one being run by the town. Walsh has worked for the Main Street Program for 17 years, the tourist commission for seven, and has been involved in the tourism industry for 25 years.

According to Walsh, the town and the parish have different brand identities and tag lines, and a goal for the 2018 and 2019 is to find a new brand for the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission. The universal brand for the parish and town was "Soothing for the Soul," which is no longer used because the tourist commission found that it was not effective. Walsh says, "We have sort of been all over the place with brands. We can't find anything we really like that we think fits."

In the realm of marketing St. Francisville as a destination, Walsh says that the tourist commission tries to use "experiential marketing" in its strategy, but is not sure if it is done successfully. In the past, most of the pictures used in marketing were stagnant, but Walsh says, "We are now trying to use a lot of pictures with people in them so that people feel more connected to that experience." Walsh addresses a challenge of the tourist commission to be social media because the platforms are run on a volunteer basis, but she says that knows that it would be more successful to hire someone and put more money into social media. She also is open to the possibility of reaching out to bloggers but has not yet looked into it. Last year a social media sweepstakes campaign was launched that had merchandise and travel deal giveaways, which was found to be successful. A similar campaign has not been run since.

Walsh describes the market for tourism in St. Francisville as broken up into the international market, leisure market, day trip market, and a group domestic market. The international market is targeted through trade shows, while the leisure market is targeted primarily through social media. The day trip market targets people coming in town for specific events, and the group domestic market includes groups such as bus groups, senior citizens, and students. The tag line and destination brand are universal throughout all of the groups, but different ad campaigns for different markets are used.


Photo: The Advocate

Laurie Walsh

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As far as advertising and media go, print advertising is the primary paid advertising used, according to Walsh. Ads are put out in local, state, and national publications currently such as *Southern Living*, *Country Roads*, *South Mississippi Living*, *Texas Monthly*, and *National Geographic Travel*. "We are trying to incorporate more digital and not as much print advertising," Walsh says. The town just started advertising through *Southern Living* Online. Radio ads and some print ads are used to promote specific events. Walsh describes many overnight accommodations and businesses as being scared of advertising in the Online world, because many owners and managers are older, which is a challenge of the town.

Walsh, a long time resident of St. Francisville, describes the rich history and plantation homes to be the most marketable aspects of the town. Outdoor activities and the small-town charm are also important draws, in her opinion. Another attraction, she says, "are people looking for that getaway to get out of the city and relax and unwind a bit." Golf and recreation through the West Feliciana Sports Park are also areas they are in the process of promoting. St. Francisville offers many events, Walsh describes, such as The Audubon Pilgrimage, Yellow Leaf Arts Festival, Walker Percy Weekend, Angola Prison Rodeo, Christmas in the Country, Polos and Pearls. Wash explained that these events are put on by different entities in the town and parish, but the tourist commission will advertise them through several platforms.

Walsh says the tourist commission has tried to market to Millennials in the past, but it has not specifically marketed to Millennials recently. Walsh says the attractions are not currently being promoted to appeal to the Millennial market, which is why they have not run campaigns for this demographic recently. Millennials in the target lack awareness of St. Francisville as a destination, she explains.

Photo: The St. Francisville Inn Website.
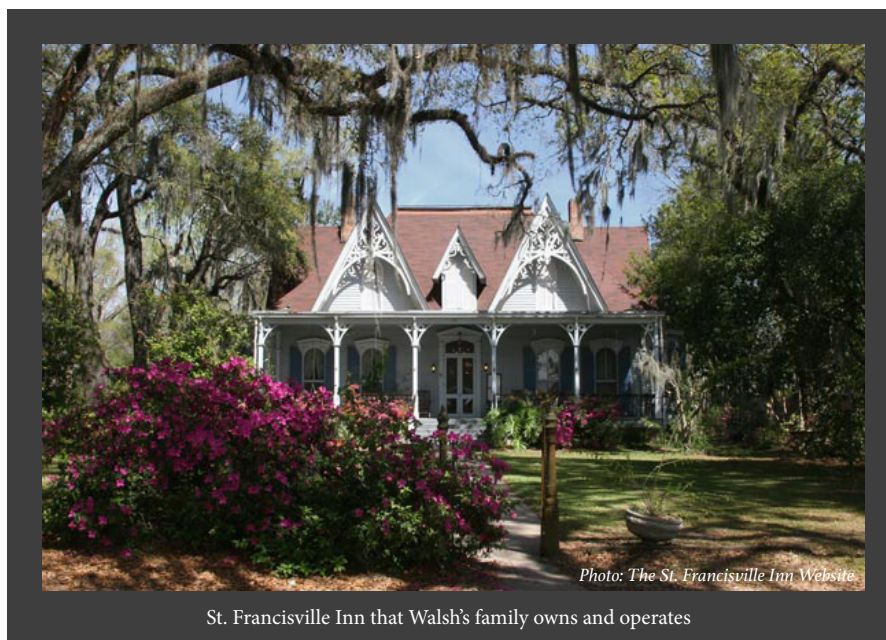
St. Francisville Inn that Walsh's family owns and operates

Interview with Johnny Patrick

West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission
Board Member

Johnny Patrick currently serves on the West Feliciana Tourist Commission and has been involved in tourism for the past six years. He is originally from St. Francisville, Louisiana, and moved back and lived in the town for the past seven years. Patrick currently volunteers to help with social media and events for St. Francisville.

His perception of St. Francisville from a resident's point of view is that the town is a "very desirable destination with beautiful scenery." When asked the most appealing qualities of St. Francisville, he listed outdoor activities, history, architecture, natural scenery, shopping, and dining. Patrick listed two different brands that portrayed St. Francisville and their current marketing tactics. These were "We love it here!" and "Find yourself in St. Francisville." He described the current logo as the text "St. Francisville, La/West Feliciana Parish" in a distinctive font.

Patrick plays a primary role in running the social media outlets for the West Feliciana Tourist Commission. He volunteers to take photos and post content on social media. The platforms used are Instagram and Facebook. Both pages are called "Visit St. Francisville." Several Snapchat filters have been used to promote specific events, says Patrick, but they do not run an official Snapchat account. On the social media pages, Patrick says that the target audiences for the posts range from Baby Boomers to Millennials who are looking to travel. They target for day trips and overnight visitors. The content of his posts include special events, attractions, accommodations, shopping and dining, scenery photos, and travel tips. Currently, the West Feliciana Tourist Commission does not use scheduled posting for social media but use a social media calendar to help keep a rotation. The most marketable aspects of St. Francisville are plantation and historical homes, natural scenery, and history, in his opinion, and these are advertised through photos on social media.

Photo: The Advocate

West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission

Patrick says no specific campaign targeting Millennials were used since he became involved with tourism in St. Francisville. Millennials that travel to St. Francisville currently include outdoor enthusiasts, cyclists, hikers, kayakers, and music lovers, Patrick explains. "St. Francisville has a lot to offer Millennials," says Patrick, "Our close proximity to Baton Rouge and LSU makes St. Francisville an easy destination for Millennials to travel. I believe that our array of outdoor activities along with our special events makes St. Francisville a very desirable destination."

INSIGHTS

Key Insights

Millennials	St. Francisville
Want unique culture, experience, dining experiences local to a place	Local and authentic activities, dining, and shops unique to St. Francisville
Looking for new and different opportunities that appeal to their emotions	An "undiscovered" place to many Millennials Opportunities of exploration Sense of nostalgia and small town charm
Enjoy sharing experiences	Beautiful scenery is aesthetically pleasing for social media posts and being shared for marketing purposes
Influenced by other Millennials on digital media	Opportunity for social media influence through blogs, travel websites, and other Millennials
Enjoy curated and customized experiences and trips	Offers many different experiences for travelers including leisure, outdoor activities, shopping, dining, and history allowing visitors a personal experience based on their interests

St. Francisville

Photo: National Historic Landmarks collection

| STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
• Close proximity to locations with large numbers of Millennials--Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lafayette • Central location within the state • Active tourist commission • Outdoor recreation activities: biking, hiking, kayaking, Mississippi River, Sports Park • Multiple festivals • Rich history and culture that can be explored through plantation homes, gardens, museums • Recognized nationally as a small town destination • Variety of overnight accommodations • Short distance between tourist attractions • Unique stores and restaurants • Charming, quaint downtown	• Lack of consistent brand identity • No current Millennial market • Not enough attractions for extended visits • Limited social media and digital media reach • Tourism website is difficult to find Online • Lack of diversity in ages of visitors • Limited budget for the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission • Lack of media coverage • Low awareness of what to do within the town
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
• Public's use of Online communication for choosing where to travel and travel information • Travel bloggers • Media coverage throughout the state and surrounding areas • Recreational travelers • Rich in history and culture • Visitors from feeder markets • Idea of customizable, personal, authentic experiences	• Limited funding for tourism • Larger cities and towns in close proximity that offer more attractions • Expensive upkeep of historical landmarks

Overarching Challenges

Millennials are not a large target market for the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission currently. Marketing efforts have focused on travelers between the ages of 40 and 70, so Millennials are not aware of the appeal of St. Francisville to people in their generation. Because Millennials are unaware of what St. Francisville has to offer, this leaves them with the ability to build a positive destination image for St. Francisville.

The biggest challenge the tourist commission faces is answering the question *What is St. Francisville?* with an answer that makes Millennials want to travel and choose St. Francisville as their destination. A lack of awareness in attractions that appeal to this target is evident, resulting in low motivation for visits from Millennials. The challenge is to overcome this attitude and replace it with an attractive view of St. Francisville in the eyes of Millennials.

Another challenge the destination faces, especially when marketing to Millennials, is the lack of a strong digital media presence. The Facebook page has 4,314 likes and 4,322 followers. Number of likes on a post range from 10 to 70 likes on average. The Instagram page has 1,586 followers, and number of likes on a posts averages at 62.

The West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission has a limited budget, which means that all social media platforms are run by volunteers who have other jobs and obligations. Social media run on a volunteer basis by different people results in a lack of consistency in posts and between platforms. Millennials, being digital natives, get large amounts of information from the Internet, digital sources, and social media.

This creates a challenge of brand awareness and image for St. Francisville in the minds of Millennials to be overcome. Integrated Marketing Communications aims to combine all media platforms with a consistent message that leaves a more effective impression of a brand in the mind of the consumer. This campaign has the opportunity to make the brand for St. Francisville as a destination consistent.
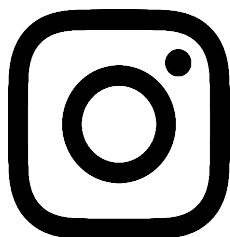
SOLUTIONS

Objectives

1

Increase awareness of St. Francisville as a destination for Millennials in feeder markets

Encourage Millennial visits to St. Francisville

2

3

Create a larger social media presence for St. Francisville through shared experiences from Millennials

Photo: St. Francisville Facebook page

West Feliciana Parish Court House

"DISCOVERY"

Discover:
find (something or someone) unexpectedly or in the course of a search

Physical Aspect	Exploring St. Francisville and discovering the physical places it offers (plantation homes, outdoor experiences, downtown, etc.)
Emotional Aspect	A space to escape from a busier lifestyle to discover yourself--in St. Francisville there are no pretenses, and you can come and be yourself--have the opportunity to customize your experience based on your personal passions and desire

1 **St. Francisville is a place of discovery for Millennials.**
- Is a place unknown by Millennials with attractions that can be discovered
- Offers a variety of attractions, outdoor activities, and beautiful scenery for discovery that are unique to the town
- Offers a space to escape from a busier lifestyle to discover interests and passions
- Gives the opportunity to discover oneself in a place where there is no expectation or pretense

2 **St. Francisville gives visitors the chance to discover local residents and connect with the community.**
- Allows travelers to immerse themselves in the local community and meet residents that are business owners, local officials, and prominent community members
- Gives visitors the chance to be involved in the community and have more than a surface level connection by getting to know local residents

3 **St. Francisville offers an authentic experience to discover.**
- Offers something new and different from surrounding areas and has its own attractions and charm to discover
- Has potential to be a discoverable experience--St. Francisville can provide travelers with the opportunity to choose their interest and passions through different experiences for different people--downtown for some, outdoor activities for some, history and culture for others
- Offers the ability for travelers to choose what they do in St. Francisville and discover experiences they would not have the opportunity to participate in other places
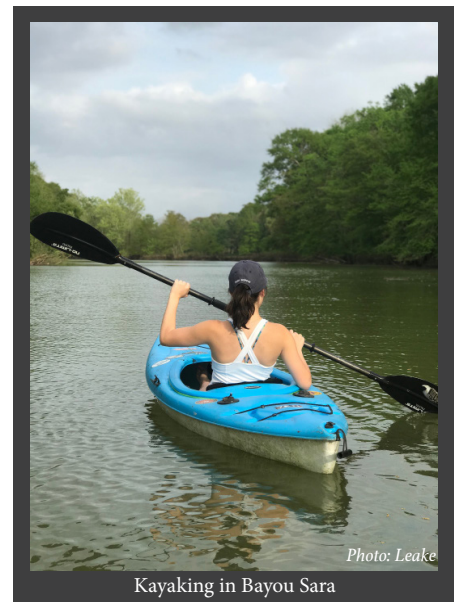
Value Proposition

St. Francisville offers an opportunity for Millennials to discover a new place full of authentic experiences. The town boasts a variety of attractions including a charming downtown, outdoor activities, opportunities for rest and leisure, and rich history and culture that appeal to the target audience. It also gives visitors an escape from the busyness of everyday life for time of self-discovery through all that it offers.

Photo: Room With No View

The Myrtles Plantation Courtyard and Carriage House Restaurant

Photo: Leake

Kayaking in Bayou Sara

Photo: Country Roads Magazine

Historic Afton Villa Gardens

Shopping at the Shanty Too Downtown

Opportunities

Photo: Leake

Photo: Friends of St. Francisville
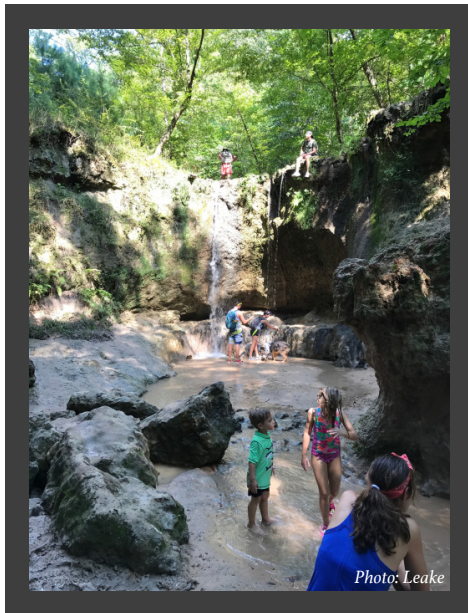
We have the opportunity to create an image and personality for St. Francisville in the minds of the target audience. We have the chance to show Millennials that St. Francisville is a place where they can discover authentic experiences, and through these experiences discover themselves.

The town offers many different attractions that give travelers the possibility to make a trip to the St. Francisville their own. From touring historic plantation homes, exploring Tunica Falls hiking trails and outdoor activities like the kayaking through Bayou Sara, to authentic shopping and dining, St. Francisville offers something for everyone to discover.

Through history found in plantation homes and other landmarks, Millennials can uncover the culture of the South and its deep past. Outdoor activities lead to the discovery of new places like waterfalls at the end of a hiking trail. Shops and restaurants in St. Francisville are unique to the town, allowing travelers the discovery of new establishments with shopping and dining experiences not offered anywhere else.

We have an opportunity to show Millennials why is it easier for them to experience a sense of discovery in St. Francisville than it is in other places like Baton Rouge or Zachary. Without constant expectations and pressures of the larger surrounding areas and a large variety of attractions to choose from, St. Francisville offers a retreat for Millennials to explore their interests and passions, which can lead to self discovery.

"St. Francisville...A Place to Discover"
#MySFV

To implement the theme "discovery" for St. Francisville, since exploration and experiences are important to Millennials, the tag line "St. Francisville…A Place to Discover" will be used. This encourages the target audience to picture St. Francisville as a destination containing people, places, and experiences to be explored and uncovered.

Millennials are unaware of what St. Francisville offers to them currently, and this message communicates to the consumer that St. Francisville does provide the attractions of a destination.

This tag line offers the idea of possibility and exploration. The message incorporates the ideas of sharing and connecting as well, which appeal to the target market. Using the phrase "A Place of Discovery," the destination is extending and invitation to come and discover the community and culture St. Francisville offers.

Photo: Louisiana Helicam

IMPLEMENTATION

6-Part Digital Revitalization

1 Updated Brand

2 Feature Stories

3 Giveaways

4 Event Calendars

5 Post Rotations

6 Hashtag Implementation

BRAND

The logo created for the campaign incorporates the John James Audubon Bridge, which connects St. Francisville to Pointe Coupee Parish across the Mississippi River. The iconic cable bridge stretches 1,583 feet across the Mississippi River, making it the longest cable-stayed span in the Western Hemisphere. This bridge was chosen to be part of the logo, first and foremost, because a bridge incorporates the ideas of discovery, travel, an invitation, and a catalyst into a destination. It leads the target audience to discover what is on the other side.

The John James Audubon Bridge was built in 2015 and shows the way the community has moved forward in the past decade in technology and resources. The bridge is the primary graphic appeal in the logo. Its orange color is true to its color in person and attracts the attention of a consumer. Above the bridge, "St. Francisville, LA" is written in the typeface *The Bold Font*, chosen because it is simple and bold. The tag line "A Place to Discover" is featured in the typeface *Chipotle* beneath the bridge because it whimsical and has the connotation of discovery.
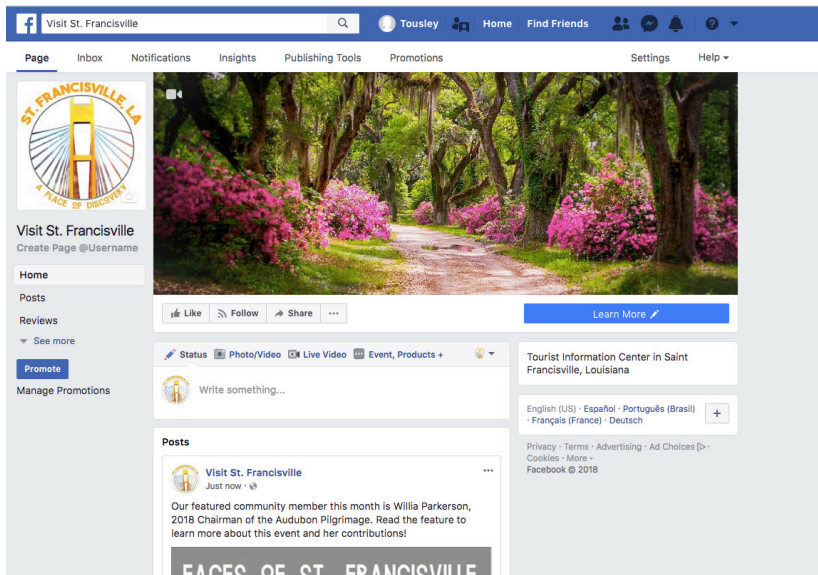
PROPOSED LOGO/TAG LINE

PURPOSE

• How St. Francisville is portrayed to the outside world through the logo and tag line

IMPLEMENTATION

For the brand to be consistent on digital media, the social media platforms will be updated to promote the proposed logo, tag line, and overall brand for the campaign.

Sample Facebook page

Sample Instagram feed

CONNECTION

• **Objective 1:** Consistent brand leads to increased awareness of the brand
• **Objective 2:** Brand is an invitation to visit
• **Objective 3:** Social media becomes consistent through a consistent brand

IDEA

Feature story articles will be written on different members of the community called "Faces of St. Francisville." They will be short articles released monthly that focus on a particular member of the community involved in an aspect of tourism. The articles will tell the story of the community member, while incorporating the tourism element that promotes St. Francisville. Feature stories will highlight business owners, restaurant managers, and residents in charge of events and festivals, among other facets. These will help the target market discover the way of life of local community members and discover the way they can connect in the community
on a visit.

PURPOSE

- To connect with the community and to make the consumer feel connected with the consumer and part of an authentic experience
- Connects the community to tourism efforts
- Connection with community creates more credibility for a destination

FACES OF ST. FRANCISVILLE

MAY FEATURE
Willia Parkerson
2018 CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDUBON PILGRAMGE
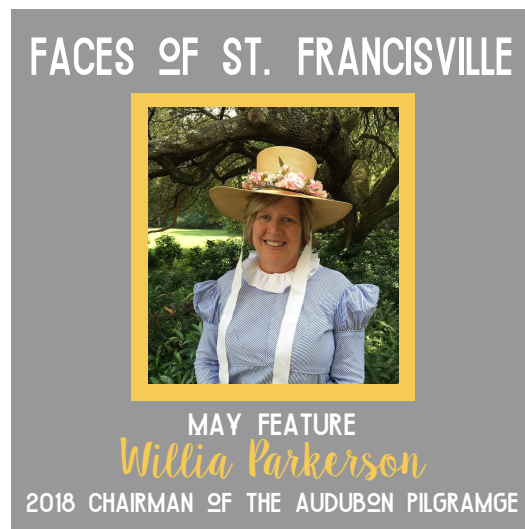
Sample feature story post

CONNECTION

- **Objective 1:** Increased awareness of the ability to connect with locals in a destination and awareness of experiences available in the destination
- **Objective 2:** Will encourage visits by giving target a connection to the destination
- **Objective 3:** Will be shared on social media platforms

IDEA

Giveaways will be hosted each quarter (four times a year) through Visit St. Francisville. They will include lodging for a night or weekend getaway to St. Francisville, along with a gift from a shop, restaurant gift card to a local spot, and a deal at a local activity, like a pass to historical tours or a kayaking tour. Giveaways will lead to the discovery of accommodations, attractions, restaurants, businesses, and experiences in St. Francisville that are previously unknown to some visitors.

PURPOSE

- Will satisfy the desire of instant gratification need in the target market
- Will promote Visit St. Francisville because giveaways would be based on a social media following the social media pages for Visit St. Francisville, liking the original post, and sharing their own post about the getaway

VISIT ST. FRANCISVILLE GIVEAWAY
includes

| Two night stay in 3V Tourist Courts | Merchandise from Temple Design | Gift Card to Francis Southern Table and Bar | Full day kayak rentals at Bayou Sara Kayak Rentals |

TO ENTER, LIKE THE PAGE "VISIT ST. FRANCISVILLE, LIKE & SHARE THIS POST, TAG 2 FRIENDS | WINNER ANNOUNCED MAY 18

Sample giveaway post

CONNECTION

- **Objective 1:** Increased awareness in what is offered in destination through the things given away
- **Objective 2:** Winner of giveaway will receive a trip to St. Francisville, target is influenced by their peers, so visit will increase visits from other travelers
- **Objective 3:** Will be shared on social media platforms

IDEA

Many events in St. Francisville throughout the year appeal to Millennials and encourage travel not promoted currently. A monthly event calendar post will be implemented on all forms of social media. A graphic will be made each month listing the events, dates, and descriptions for events occurring in the town, and will be posted on Facebook and Instagram. Event calendars will encourage visitors to discover special occasions offered by the destination that coincide with their personal interests and passions.

PURPOSE

- Visual appeal of a graphic will gain attention of social media followers, who can use the information to stay informed of events and occurrences that are worth a visit
- Can be shared

Sample event calendar

CONNECTION

- **Objective 1:** Increased awareness in specific events and attractions in St. Francisville, not otherwise known
- **Objective 2:** Calendar will encourage visits to these specific events
- **Objective 3:** Will be shared on social media platforms and visual appeal of a graphic will gain attention on social media
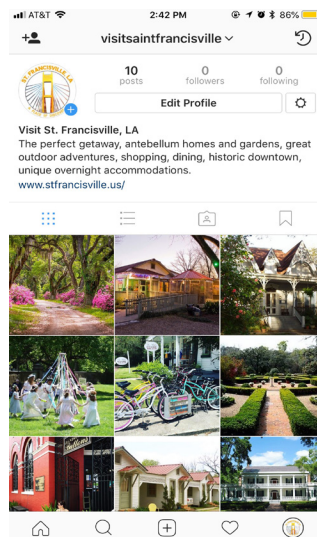
Part 5: Post Rotation

IDEA

A social media calendar will be implemented that will rotate posts of the following categories: history and culture, accommodations, shopping and dining, scenery photos, and outdoor activities. Posts will go on a rotation daily and follow the same schedule. In addition, posts will be made about special events occurring, the monthly event calendar, monthly feature stories, and quarterly giveaways.

Photos that accompany these posts will be more consistent. Currently, some photos posted on both Facebook and Instagram are low-quality, blurry pictures, and the revitalization will transition to only high-quality photo posts.

Another push will be to use photos that incorporate people, so that the consumer can picture themselves as being a part of the culture and local community. The incorporation of a post rotation will help the market discover each facet of tourism that St. Francisville offers, giving equal attention and publicity to each.

PURPOSE

- Will provide variety in posts and make them more consistent, interesting, and appealing to target market

Sample Instagram feed with post rotation

CONNECTION

- **Objective 1:** Provides consistent posts highlighting different attractions of the destination that appeal to a wide market
- **Objective 3:** Posts will be consistent across social media platforms through scheduling

HASHTAG

Label for content that it can be used for others to search other content on that topic quickly

IDEA

All posts that use the hashtag #MySFV will be grouped together on social media sites to create a brand awareness and interest in the topic. Posts on social media by St. Francisville will include the hashtag, and it will be encouraged that community members and tourists include the hashtag in their posts as well. The hashtag will invite visitors to discover their own St. Francisville and customize an experience that is personal to their individual interests and passions.

A hashtag will encourage two-way communication because the consumer will have a voice in the media. Instead of viewing media with information about St. Francisville, they can post content from their experience. A hashtag will allow them to interact with other visitors who have posted similar content. This will increase St. Francisville's credibility as a destination. Those running social media for St. Francisville can interact with visitors that use this hashtag easily with likes, shares, and comments, creating a connection between the brand and the consumer.

#MySFV

Sample Facebook and Instagram posts using the hashtag

PURPOSE

- Can be used to relay the message on social media posts to attract more attention
- Shows other travelers what was discovered on peers trip to St. Francisville
- Encompasses the idea that the traveler is invited into the community and encouraged to make it "their" St. Francisville

CONNECTION

- **Objective 1:** Increasing awareness of the destination and brand with the ability to search for content with the same hashtag
- **Objective 3:** Grows social media presence by allowing visitors to post about "their St. Francisville" and connect to St. Francisville's digital media platforms

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Taking Action

SHORT-TERM PLAN

The proposal for a short-term action plan is to develop social media platforms through the 6-part digital revitalization. Implementation of these six initiatives will take place by the West Feliciana Tourist Commission volunteers for social media, who will use them as guidelines. The revitalization will help the campaign reach its objectives through social media. Volunteers will use the following action steps to begin to implement these initiatives.

Part 1: Updated Brand
• Update all social media platforms with the proposed brand, including the logo and tag line.

Part 2: Feature Stories
• Choose twelve community members for the year that can be highlighted through feature stories to promote tourism.
• Create one short feature story a month focusing on a specific resident.
    • Opportunity for local students in West Feliciana Parish School System to write feature stories to be shared
• Share feature stories on social media platforms.

Part 3: Giveaways
• Contact local businesses, restaurants, activities, and accommodations to donate goods and services to giveaways.
• Create and share giveaway posts on social media.

Part 4: Event Calendars
• Create a calendar each month including all special events, activities, and festivals.
• Share calendar on social media.

Part 5: Post Rotations
• Follow post rotation schedule when posting social media posts.
• Include feature stories, giveaways, and event calendars in addition to normal posts.

Part 6: Hashtag Implementation
• Use #MySFV in Facebook and Instagram posts for *Visit St. Francisville.*
• Interact with followers who use #MySFV through likes, comments, and shares from the *Visit St. Francisville* pages

LONG-TERM PLAN

The proposal for a long-term action plan is for the West Feliciana Parish Tourist Commission to hire an employee that will spend full-time promoting the brand of St. Francisville on digital media. This employee will further develop the brand of St. Francisville, run all digital media platforms, and create content that will meet objectives set by the campaign.

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1 Evaluation of Brand Awareness

- Attitudinal study of Millennials in the Baton Rouge Area
- Survey given to LSU students and young professionals in the target market at the beginning of the campaign, after 3 month, after 6 months, and after 1 year on attitudes and awareness of the destination
- Measure changes in attitude from the first survey to the last survey

2 Evaluation of visits

- Measure event attendance by Millennials in St. Francisville
- Measure number of visitors to attractions
- Measure increase in accommodations bookings

3 Evaluation of social media presence

- Measure social media engagement through number of followers on Instagram and Facebook
- Evaluate interactions including the number of likes, shares, and comments on social media

Endnotes

[1] For more information on St. Francisville, see also http://www.stfrancisville.us

[2] For further discussion of the Louisiana tourism industry, see also https://www.crt.state.la.us/tourism/louisiana-research/current-research/index

[3] For more information on tourism activities in Louisiana, see https://www.crt.state.la.us/Assets/Tourism/research/documents/

[4] For further information on travel markets, see also https://www.crt.state.la.us/tourism/louisiana-research/index

[5] Walsh, Laurie. Personal interview. 29 March 2018.

[6] For further discussion of Millennials as a market for tourism, see also Santos, 661

[7] For further discussion of the value of instant gratification, see also Pentescu, 2

[8] For further discussion of on experiential marketing, see also Lee, 10

[9] For further discussion of influences of Millennials, see also Zivkovic, 1-4

[10] For further discussion of the importance of social media to Millennials, see also Muk, 1-10

[11] For further discussion of two-way communication, see also Naumovska and Blazeska, 4