

Memorandum

General Administration



To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Subject: Strategic Marketing Plan
Date: September 28, 2011
Number: 2011-284

The attached Strategic Marketing Plan was prepared by Upstream and reviewed at the September 21st Study Session. It includes seven measureable goals for the next two years.

- Increase external city-wide communications
- Increase new investment by \$20M and 200 new or retained jobs per year
- Increase subscriptions to the Water Service Repair Program by 12% per year and the Sewer Lateral Repair Program by 22% per year
- Increase an average of six paid rounds of golf per playable date at Highland Springs Golf Course
- Increase an average of 36 paid admissions per swimmable day at Whitewater Junction
- Increase net revenue at the Rock Island Fitness and Activity center by 3% per year
- Develop efforts to coordinate Parks and Recreation marketing

RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the City Council approve the attached Strategic Marketing Plan and authorize the staff to begin implementation.

Submitted by: Robert T. Hawes, P.E., Interim City Manager

City of Rock Island Strategic Marketing Plan 9.26.11

UpStream worked with City staff to create the following strategic marketing plan for the City of Rock Island. The marketing plan focuses on the services and products the City provides to citizens and businesses, and is designed to increase enterprise revenues and provide cost savings.

As City Council has expressed additional marketing of City services is important, the plan addresses the best ways to externally market City services and products. This marketing plan differs from previous community marketing plans in that it looks at City-only provided services and products, rather than marketing the entire community. However, efforts to market the entire community can complement this plan and should be pursued when possible. The plan builds on the success of previous community marketing plans, and will use elements of the Rock Solid, Rock Island brand where appropriate.

The plan starts with a review of market research to outline the advantages and challenges the City faces. The next section is a listing of all marketing tools currently in use by the City. The majority of the document is the proposed goals with the supporting strategies and tactics.

Given the limited time and resources available, seven goals are proposed. Goals should be measurable and achievable with the strategies and tactics. The tactics presented are just the beginning steps, and these will be added to and changed as staff works the plan. Once the plan is approved by City Council, the blank columns of responsible party and due dates will be added. Please note that the budget estimates listed are really just estimates and have not been specifically priced; these estimates are provided to show that the plan can be economically feasible to execute.

The goals, strategies, and tactics have been reviewed and endorsed by the City Manager, City Department Heads, and instrumental City Staff. UpStream will be involved in the execution of the plan, but it will take the support of City Staff to make the plan become reality.

Part of the success of the plan will depend on allocating funding to the strategies. UpStream recommends that a portion of the previous community marketing budget be allocated to these strategies.

**City of Rock Island
Strategic Marketing Plan
9.26.11**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > innovative > diverse > creative > welcoming community > green > historic > residents think it's good place to live > many citizens lived in RI for life > citizens live & work in RI > outstanding City services > balanced budget > committed leadership > website & Channel 9 good distribution channels > expanded Martin Luther King Jr. Center > parks & rec excellent > library system & collection > new aquatic center > new downtown park > expanded RIFAC > non-residents rate golf courses high > strong public/private partnerships > strong neighborhood programs > variety of housing > schools prepare for real life > leader in downtown development > riverfront development > downtown residential > arts & cultural opportunities > variety of restaurants > convenience businesses > successful B-to-B businesses > Jumer's Casino & Hotel > Augustana College > Trinity Medical Center > corporate insurance offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > non-residents don't think good place to live > people think RI will be same in 10 yrs > City marketing not taking advantage of collaborations > some staff reaching retirement age > aging infrastructure > reduced income > high property tax rate > aging citizens > frequency of downtown visits down > District lost positive perception > non-residents feel RI is not safe; certain areas of RI unsafe > non-residents have lower perception of property up-keep > old city > people perceive diversity as negative > higher percentage of low income residents > lack of retail > lack of commercial business > more foreclosures

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > sponsorships of City programs & facilities > increased use by consumers of digital communications > outside firms marketing water/sewer lateral program > successful legacy businesses > many businesses independently owned > people becoming more environmentally conscious > vacant land > proximity to Arsenal > First Army relocation > Thompson prison activation > Amtrak > combined chamber & regional marketing > Columbia Park, College Hill District > decreasing country club memberships > increase of stay-cations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > pressure on reducing taxes is greater > State of Illinois budget crisis > change of Federal earmarks > increased State corporate & income tax > minimum wage > more housing starts in IA > demographic profile more attractive to retailers in IA > population loss

Current City Communications Mediums

In House:

- website
- Channel 9
- eNews
- Parks brochure
- annual water quality report direct mail
- Neighborhood News
- brochures / flyers
- utility bills
- utility bill envelopes
- in facility signage
- Parks digital sign
- RIFAC interior digital sign
- Update Rock Island
- billboard on water pumping station
- Reverse 9-1-1
- downtown kiosks
- wayfinding signage
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Flickr
- YouTube
- Quad City Chamber website banner ad

Traditional Media:

- newspaper ads
- TV ads
- radio ads
- online ads
- billboards

Marketing Goals, Strategies, Tactics 2011-2013

Goals are annualized.

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
Increase external City-wide communications by July 31, 2012.	Improve Channel 9 programming.	Budget request for software for the channel to increase capabilities, as current capabilities are maxed.			\$25,000
		Consider partnership with local college to produce videos.			
		Discuss with Mediacom opportunities to use equipment in City Council Chambers for additional video.			
		Investigate opportunities to have business partnerships display information.			
		Determine what should play on slide presentations (all City information or only current events).			
		Work with departments to determine content and process to keep information up to date.			
	Increase use of videos on City website and auxiliary sites.	Purchase a flip or video camera(s).			\$500
		Train staff how to record and edit videos, and upload onto the web.			
		Determine best topics for videos and encourage department use.			
	Coordinate all direct mail pieces from the City.	Inventory all direct mail pieces sent from the City (including Neighborhood News, Parks Program Guide, & annual water report).			existing budgets
		Work with City departments to increase cost efficiencies by combining mailings.			
		Determine which messaging (based on goals) should be added to direct mail pieces.			
	Develop opportunities for individuals to sign up for eNews.	Determine best avenues to gain email addresses (with permission) from citizens.			existing budgets
	Continue to enhance media relations.	Train staff on how to determine what is newsworthy, and how to pitch the story.			UpStream staff time

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
		Train staff on how to write a press release that will get used.			
	Create a new resident kit.	Develop a new resident welcome kit providing the basic information about City services.			\$3,000
		Explore opportunities for business partnerships or sponsorships.			
		Mail to new residents based on new water hook-ups.			
		Integrate a follow-up phone call from City Council or staff.			
		Update City website with info & ability to download kit.			
	Review utility bill mailings including envelopes, stuffers, and bills.	Meet with service provider to review options and gather pricing.			existing budget
		Develop schedule including messaging.			
		Consider using QR codes with dedicated landing page.			
		If determined that utility billing will be monthly, develop plan to inform public.			
	Increase online payments of City bills.	Redesign eRock landing page to be more user-friendly.			\$1,000
		Develop marketing tools to encourage online payments.			
		Craft messaging that can be used throughout the City.			
	Increase eBill subscribers.	Develop email based on eRock users to encourage eBill subscriptions.			existing budget
		Determine if incentive is appropriate to encourage sign-ups.			
	Improve cross-promotional opportunities at City facilities targeted toward current customers.	Inventory current signage and promotional materials, as well as new opportunities.			existing budget
		Create signage and system for replacement.			

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
	Update billboard on City's water pumping station.	Determine which service or amenity should be promoted.			\$2,500-\$8,000
		Develop artwork and create vinyl.			
		Determine schedule billboard artwork rotation.			
	Conduct bi-annual telephone survey.	Contract with third party to conduct market research.			\$20,000
	Evaluate current marketing resources for effectiveness.	Look at user statistics for website, eNews, Facebook, etc. to determine if resources are being used.			existing budget
		Include questions in telephone survey about use of City-controlled marketing tools.			
	Recruit marketing interns.	Determine which departments could benefit from having a marketing intern.			no cost
		Develop job descriptions.			
		Work with local colleges and universities to recruit.			
Increase new investment by \$20 million and 200 new or retained jobs.	Determine target markets for new business.	Using research, determine which target markets should be pursued for new businesses.			CED & UpStream staff time
	Develop messaging for business efforts – including recruiting new businesses and encouraging business expansions.	Create messaging focused on selling the benefits (not the features) of doing business in Rock Island, including appropriate research.			UpStream staff time
		Gather testimonials and business success stories to share.			
	Develop promotional tools for new business recruitment.	Determine which mediums will be most effective and within budget (flyers, websites, advertising, etc).			\$10,000 CED budget
		Include research that optimizes Rock Island's assets.			
		Create marketing tools for target markets.			
	Review sales process.	Review sales process from perspective of new business.			staff time

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
		Evaluate response times, attractiveness of materials and spaces, ability to provide what is requested, etc.			
		Consider utilizing a customer relationship management (CRM) system to track leads.			\$0-\$5,000
	Hire third party to conduct exit research.	Impartial feedback on why a business moved or chose not to locate in Rock Island can provide valuable insight on what the obstacles are.			\$2,500
		Review obstacles and remove barriers where appropriate.			
	Investigate small business assistance center.	Determine if it is feasible to provide small businesses personalized, professional assistance in areas such as marketing, accounting, and legal services.			\$25,000-\$100,000 CED budget
		If feasible, develop partnerships with service providers (including SCORE & SBDC) to assist small businesses.			
	Develop regular communications with existing businesses.	Create regular eNewsletter for businesses talking about relevant issues and including business success stories.			existing budget
	Highlight business successes.	Implement business recognition program.			existing budget
		Issue press releases on all business openings, expansions, and improvements.			
		Consider creating partnership with local newspaper to showcase successes.			
		Update all internal communication tools regularly (website, social media, channel 9, Update Rock Island, etc.).			
	Develop tracking mechanism, or dashboard, to monitor success.	Monitor sales tax, income tax, hotel/motel tax, food & beverage tax, property tax, jobs, etc. on a regular basis.			staff time

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
Increase subscriptions to the Water Sewer Repair Program by 12% and Sewer Lateral Repair Program by 22%.	Determine the ROI on every new customer for each service.	Based on averages, calculate the increased income from each new customer.			staff time
	Add online forms for service sign ups.	Create online forms make it easier for customers to sign up for service.			staff time
	Determine campaign to solicit subscriptions and develop timeline for implementation.	Following are ideas of tactics that still need to be determined based on a 1 yr. return: Consider a pay-for-performance sales model with third party. GIS mapping of current customers and repairs to determine target areas. Include flyer in utility bills on a regular basis. Gather customer testimonials. Develop eNews specifically about the program. Create and distribute promotional flyers through direct mail and direct contact.			\$10,000-\$40,000 some from existing budget, budget would be based on proportionate return
Increase an average of 6 paid rounds of golf per playable day at Highland Springs. (Playable day defined as no rain, under 90 degrees, April 1 – October 31.)	Consider bringing in an outside golf marketing pro to evaluate marketing efforts and promotions, and suggest changes.	Consult a golf marketing expert, who will assist in creating strategies.			\$5,000-\$6,000
	Conduct market research on current Highland Springs golfers.	Create an online and/or paper survey to establish target market and determine preferences.			staff time
	Include Highland Springs in Parks & Recreation annual advertising & communications plan.	Develop target markets.			existing budgets
		Develop messaging based on benefits for golfer.			
Investigate a loyalty program.	Determine tipping point which would get more usage.			\$2,500-\$3,500	

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
		Determine incentives.			
	Use email to encourage repeat customers.	Use Facebook app to provide coupon and gather customer email addresses.			included in Parks & Rec goal
		Have in-clubhouse giveaway to gather email addresses.			
	Develop targeted, personalized direct mail campaign.	Create direct mail based on defined target market.			\$5,000-\$10,000
	Determine promotional deals.	Determine incentives or discounts to drive traffic during non-peak times and on weather-impaired days.			existing budgets
Increase an average of 36 paid admissions per swimmable day at Whitewater Junction. (Swimmable day defined as no rain.)	Develop marketing program targeted to moms with small kids, who provided the highest return on investment (ROI) on daily passes.	Explore all social media opportunities.			included in Parks & Rec goal
		Explore a text messaging marketing campaign.			
	Develop partnerships with food and drink providers for concessions.	Work with distributors to determine feasibility of becoming the official provider to gain discounts.			staff time
	Include Whitewater Junction in Parks & Recreation annual advertising & communications plan.	Targeted to moms with small kids.			existing budgets
		Develop messaging.			
	Work with staff to develop promotions targeted to the schools.	Identify PTAs, principals, etc. and provide customized promotional materials.			\$1,500
	Develop promotions for non-Rock Island residents.	Create targeted direct mail campaign.			\$5,000-\$10,000
	Investigate a loyalty program.	Determine tipping point which would get more usage.			\$2,500-\$3,500
	Determine promotional deals.	Determine incentives or discounts to drive traffic during non-peak times and on weather-impaired days.			existing budget

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
	Develop sales program to promote private rentals.	Determine target market for private rentals, especially rentals during normal hours.			existing budget
		Create promotional materials and sales pitch.			
Increase net revenue at RIFAC by 3%.	Conduct market research on membership.	Create an online and/or paper survey to establish target market and determine preferences.			staff time
		Conduct demographic analysis of membership.			\$1,000
	Include RIFAC in Parks & Recreation annual advertising & communications plan.	Develop target markets based on current membership.			existing budgets
		Develop messaging.			
	Develop benefits sheet comparing services with other major fitness centers and gyms in area.	Conduct analysis of why RIFAC is better than others.			staff time
	Develop membership retention program.	Conduct exit surveys on why members quit.			staff time
		Evaluate reasons and determine if changes to membership should be made.			
		Investigate opportunities to provide added benefits based on price or longevity of membership.			
	Cultivate programs during off-peak times.	Determine what programming can be added during off-peak times (11 am- 4 pm and summer).			existing budget
		Develop promotional plan for these times.			
	Develop targeted, personalized direct mail campaign.	Create direct mail based on defined target market.			\$5,000-\$10,000
Develop efforts to coordinate Parks and Recreation marketing by February 2012.	Develop an annual advertising and communications plan for Parks & Recreation.	Review all spending and determine areas where exposure and amount spent can be maximized.			existing budget
		Create partnerships with traditional media based on year-round spend (TV, radio, print, billboard).			

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
		Create communications calendar utilizing all internal communication tools by quarter (website, eNews, Channel 9, Facebook, YouTube, signage, flyers).			
	Review profit margins to determine which products and services provide the biggest return on investment (ROI).	Maximize sales on these products and services by targeting marketing towards these efforts.			staff time
	Develop a coupon tracking and management system.	Investigate coupon management software.			\$5,000
		Determine which coupons are most effective.			
		Limit coupons to most effective mediums to drive traffic during non-peak hours or to reach specific target markets.			
	Develop new media opportunities to promote Parks & Recreation services.	Pursue social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, group deals, contents, mobile apps, text messaging, QR codes.			\$5,000
		Explore new avenues as they are launched into the marketplace.			
	Build database of Parks users.	Gather email, mailing address, mobile phone numbers, etc. of Parks users to establish master database.			staff time
		Use database to cross-promote Parks & City programs to users.			
	Evaluate in-City competition for Schwiebert Riverfront Park.	Review differences between renting Schwiebert Riverfront Park, activity permits, and Great River Plaza permits.			staff time
		Make adjustments to permits to balance all objectives.			
	Sell ads in Park Program Guide.	Determine number of pages for ads, develop pricing, and set policy.			staff time
		Create list of potential advertisers and call.			

Goal	Strategies	Tactics	Responsible	Due Date	Budget Estimates
	Expand partnerships with Rock Island School District to increase usage.	Work with PTAs and other school groups to establish new and expand existing partnerships for programs.			staff time

