

MARKETING PLAN

FINAL PROJECT

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Marketing Plan

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Company Customer Competition

The Company:

[xxx] is an online community based company that specializes in planning, booking, and outfitting individuals for camping adventures. [xxx] achieves this by providing a community for people who participate in outdoor adventures, as well as a launching pad for those who want to go on a trip, but don't know where to begin.

The Customer:

[xxx] target customers are outdoor enthusiasts of all skill levels who want to plan or book a trip in Southern and Central Ontario. The trip planning service can create a custom trip for the beginner, or serve as a basic guideline for more experienced adventurers. [xxx] association with Ontario Parks as well as recognized outfitting companies provides value to the user as all the information is localized in one place.

The target customer is a person or people who want expert advice and opinions on their travel destinations, as well as a community space to showcase their own adventures and advice to others. The user has the ability to talk to other people of similar interest, as well as connect with suppliers and outfitters who can assist in the planning and execution of their trip.

[xxx]'s audience are those who love adventure travel, or want to experience adventure travel, and want a convenient place to find out information, plan a trip, and get travel advice.

The following two personas are who [xxx] are marketed toward:

Professional Artist, Weekend Adventurer



Kevin Anders

Age: 35

Occupation: Graphic Designer

Income: 60K

Status: Single

- Kevin is a professional mid-career designer who enjoys living an active lifestyle to balance his sedentary work schedule. Kevin knows that spending hours in front of a computer is not good for his health so he does his best to exercise as much as possible.
- Kevin lives in a small condo with a small storage unit, suitable for a single individual. Limited home space means that Kevin must prioritize what possessions he owns and keeps in storage.
- His professional and personal goals are to save money to eventually own a property and possibly start a family. However Kevin has the luxury of setting aside some of his income to pursue his past-times.
- Because of his busy career, Kevin values his time. His love of exercise and travel is important to him; however he prefers the activity more than the planning phase. Kevin often books pre-planned packages on websites such as Travelocity and GAdventures however he always wished that he had the ability to customize his trips further, or find shorter trips that fit into his schedule.

- Kevin was once an avid camper; however he still enjoys weekend camping trips in Southern Ontario as it is convenient and close. Kevin still owns some general camping gear, however much of it is getting old and dated, as he has not invested too much money in buying new equipment for trips that have become more infrequent.
- Kevin prefers public transit or walking/riding a bike when he travels in the city, however he owns a car, and uses it frequently when he has a chance to travel out of town.
- Kevin buys athletic wear that is suitable for his lifestyle, but is pragmatic in his spending choices. He will, however, spend extra money on premium athletic clothing that he can also justify using in his daily life.
- Kevin dreams of buying a cottage or property away from the city in the future, where he can travel to relax and enjoy his outdoor past-times.
- Kevin loves to travel with others, but is also amenable to the idea of adventuring alone (or meeting others as he adventures). Having previous experience, Kevin knows that one shouldn't adventure travel alone, and would value a guide or group if he does not have a friend to adventure with.
- Kevin likes to know what professionals have to say about parks and destinations; however he also values the opinions of others who may have their own experiences, both good and bad. In reading about other peoples' experiences, Kevin feels that he can make a more informed decision.
- His outdoor interests are varied and he enjoys discovering new activities.
- Kevin shops at places like MEC and Europe Bound for clothes and equipment for activities because he knows the brands and trusts the quality of the brands. He is familiar with most of the big-name companies that makes outdoor equipment, but does not spend extra time learning about every one.
- Kevin occasionally reads magazines and articles about adventure travelling, and wants to become more active in adventure travelling again. However Kevin prefers to find all his information in one convenient place.
- Kevin will often plan long trips ahead of time, but also values short weekend trips to break up the monotony of work.

The Trailblazing Photographer Socialite



Monica Weathers

Age: 26

Occupation: Physiotherapist

Income: 40K

Status: Single

- Monica is a young woman beginning her career as a physiotherapist, with goals of specializing in sports injury and rehabilitation. Monica works in several different clinics which requires her to travel to different locations for work.
- Her decision to become a physiotherapist was due to her own interest in outdoor activities such as mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, running, and weight training.
- Monica grew up with the philosophy of 'leave no stone left unturned'. As an adult this has translated in to wanting to see as much of the world, both at home and abroad, as possible.
- Monica has a very active social life, and loves to read blogs as well as blog about her own life. She frequents pinterest, facebook, and other social networks. Additionally, she uses twitter and instagram to stay in touch with her friends.
- Monica records all her memorable moments using her camera, with the intention of sharing her experiences online on her favourite social networks.
- Monica's work schedule includes weekend work so she values the time she has off.

- When she has several consecutive days off, she likes to plan an activity that allows her to experience the outdoors in challenging ways.
- In the summer months, Monica will frequently do short backpacking or bike trips along trails in Southern Ontario, for both fun and exercise. She has met many people who share similar interests and would love to plan more trips to other destinations she has yet to explore.
- In the winter months, Monica enjoys skiing and snowboarding, but also loves to explore the wilderness on snowshoes or cross-country skis. She has done winter camping before, but prefers the comfort of a cabin or ranger hut to winter tents.
- Monica enjoys meeting new people on her trips, and loves the opportunity to participate in social activities while on her adventure trips. She has travelled with guides before, but also feels comfortable travelling without one.
- Monica is very organized and enjoys planning. She values the ability to make her own lists, as well as appreciates list suggestions. The ability to plan her trips beforehand helps her enjoy her trips more as she knows she has the things that she needs.
- Monica is on a limited budget as she is just beginning her career, so she does not own a lot of adventure gear. However she likes to buy a new piece of equipment each time she takes a trip. In this way, she is slowly building her equipment list.
- Because of her active social life, Monica values the ability to read or hear about other peoples' experiences. She likes to make informed decision and finds it useful to read up on other opinions.
- Monica is always looking for new ways to challenge herself, both physically and mentally. This has given her a very adventurous spirit and drives her to seek out new possibilities in adventure travel.
- Monica books long vacations out of Canada when she has the time and money, however she fulfills her need to explore in an a healthy and active way by taking shorter (and less expensive) trips locally.
- Being an independent person, Monica has decided to travel and experience as much as possible before she decides to settle down in the future.
- Monica lives in a rental apartment, and dreams of purchasing a place of her own in the future. For now, though, home is a her 'base of operations' where she plans her active life from.
- Limited space makes her pick and choose what equipment she has as space is a factor. However, for larger items, she can store things at her parents' house, who she visits frequently.

The Competition:

Mountain Equipment Co-Op (MEC.ca)

MEC is a company that specializes in outdoor activity supplies. It is one of the most popular and recognized suppliers. MEC offers goods for adventure travel, as well as more general 'active lifestyle' products. MEC online and in-store offers a community driven events board that customers can advertise on, but does not often officially hold events of their own. Furthermore, although MEC does its best to filter content, outfitters and trips advertised are not officially 'approved' so the customer will always have to keep 'caveat emptor' in mind.

[xxx] would associate with MEC as a supply company as MEC is a trusted supplier of quality goods.

Ontario Outfitters (<http://www.ontario-outfitters.ca/>)

Ontario Outfitters specializes in fishing excursions throughout Ontario. With a variety of options depending on what you'd like to fish for, a user can select from a dropdown menu and get fishing information and possible trips to book through a variety of outfitters. This site is mostly a hub for outfitters to advertise from, and does not provide much user feedback or information outside of a suppliers list.

Tripadvisor.ca

Trip advisor is a community based forum that allows destinations to advertise their services, as well as users to rate those services and experiences. This site offers up to date information about a large spectrum of trip destinations, not specifically adventure travel though there are reviews about outdoor travel destinations (like lodges, etc). This site also advertises for destinations and can serve as a gateway to book a vacation, though the focus is on my traditional travel and not adventure travel.

Ontario Travel (<http://www.ontariotravel.net/en/play/outdoor-adventures>)

The Ontario Travel website features a wealth of information about destinations for travel in Ontario. Developed by Ontario Travel Tourism, this site features destinations, events, and resources such as weather and travel tips. You can select existing travel packages (from third parties) or use the resources for your own vacation. It features both adventure trips as well as more conventional destinations, and has articles on how to plan a trip. Because of the variety of destinations, Ontario Travel does not focus on one area of the market, and relies on third party companies to provide trip packages.

SWOT analysis

Strengths:

[xxx] online site provides users with a variety of information about parks in Southern and Central Ontario, including up to date weather and conditions. [xxx] is associated with Ontario Parks as well as a variety of outfitters and guides who can provide professional services as well as answer community questions. Users are also encouraged to post feedback and experiences about their own trips, with a template blog-like forum for users to easily create a narrative of their adventure.

[xxx] is a free to join, generating revenue through its services of a trip planning, as well as charging a fee service fee for advertisers on the site. The user can use a form based questionnaire that will help them find destinations, equipment, and guides depending on their needs. When the form is completed, the user will be presented with available options based on their responses, as well as a planned food and supplies list, all of which can be purchased and mailed to the customer, or be made available at a designated supplier.

Articles from Ontario Parks and established outfitters provide the user with professional information to generate confidence in the expertise of the planning service. Community based experiences and feedback adds further confidence as individuals who have used the service provided by [xxx] and its associated outfitters can drive the popularity of trips as well as help others avoid potential problems.

Weaknesses:

[xxx] is not a supplier, nor is it a travel outfitter. Instead [xxx] is a service that puts customers in contact with suppliers and outfitters.

[xxx] will feature articles about different destinations and parks however this content will come from official sources (such as Travel Ontario or Ontario Parks) as well as users. This type of service allows users to post good and bad experience. All the feedback will be taken in to consideration and also shared with associated suppliers and outfitters to drive towards an even better service.

Opportunities:

[xxx] is a service that is unique in that it not only offers package ideas, but allows a user to narrow down trips using a form-based system of decisions. This will help a customer find the trip that best suits their interests. This will set [xxx] apart from other booking services.

[xxx] also provides a trip planning process through a shopping cart-like system which allows a customer to not only create a list of needed supplies and equipment, but also to buy all or some of the equipment from retailers and suppliers. In this way, the customer can purchase or rent everything needed for their trip.

[xxx] will supply the forum for a community of like-minded individuals to pursue their passion of adventure travel in Southern Ontario, and link them to the resources and services to make their trips happen. This will drive the value of the site as more reviews and experiences add to site content, as well

as add to the credibility of suppliers and services. Lastly, a forum rating system will allow users to go from new travellers to experienced adventurers based on the number of trips taken, as well as the quality of advice/feedback given. This will add value to the customer as it adds credibility to advice, as well as drives customers to travel/experience more to earn status in the community.

[xxx] can monetize off of the trip planning service, sales of gear, as well as advertising space. In associating with companies that supply products and services, [xxx] can make a percentage of income off of successful sales. Furthermore, companies and services can pay to have their products and offerings 'bumped' to the top of the list of choices for trips and products.

[xxx] because the service will be community driven, [xxx] will play a role in making adventure travel better for the consumer through customer experiences and reviews. Furthermore, this data can be collected and sold to interested parties to make adventure travel a better experience for the customer, as well as further develop products based on demand and performance.

[xxx] as the cost of travel abroad increases, more people may begin to value travel locally. This factor, mixed in with an ECO tourism-like message may provide a driving factor for adventure travellers to explore what Southern Ontario has to offer.

Threats:

[xxx] faces threats from its main competitor, which happens to be Ontario Travel as this is the official point of information about destinations in Ontario, as well as parks information. However, although Ontario Travel offers packaged trips, it does not have a thorough trip-planning device, nor does it focus on user feedback and reviews. Additionally, if [xxx] could partner with Ontario Travel, both could work towards increasing interest in customers.

[xxx] business is connecting customers with who are interested in adventure travel with businesses and services that offer this. Thus [xxx] is reliant upon those businesses and their practices. Loss of those businesses or services would impact the variety of [xxx]'s offerings. However this can be circumvented by continually adding other vendors and services to the list, as well as bringing value to 'plan it yourself' trips that are not reliant on a service outside of that needed to book the time or space.

[xxx] is subject to changes in law that might affect the ability for people to travel in specific areas or parks. This would be unavoidable; however [xxx] could increase its offerings over time to accommodate for other activities beyond hiking, biking, and paddling, depending on demand and the success of the other activities.

Positioning Statement

For **Adventure Travellers of all levels**, who want to **experience the rich variety of Southern Ontario**, and who **value the ability to plan their trip, or have their trip planned for them**, and need a **convenient place to get information, gear, and book a trip**, as well as **see and read other peoples experiences**, as well as **share their own experiences and advice**, [xxx] is the **definitive place on the internet to go**.

[xxx] provides the forum for **adventure travellers to find suppliers/services** as well as **book trips and find out about destinations** for places to go and see in **Southern Ontario**. The **key benefits of using [xxx]** is the promise to **relevant and accurate information about destinations, suppliers and supplies, services, as well as up to date information on weather and other conditions** from **reliable sources**. Furthermore, [xxx] **will provide support for their community by providing the ability for users to share their stories and advice with others**.

Unlike its competitors [xxx] **promises to be a one-stop source for information, supplies, advice, and travel booking**, so that the adventurer spends less time planning, and more time adventuring.

Action Plan

Price:

[xxx] will be a free of charge service from a user point of view. Money will be earned from the user when the user books a trip or purchases equipment from the site. In this way, the money earned from the user will be mostly invisible to the user.

The primary cash-flow will be from vendors and services offered through the site. This will be reflected in a nominal percentage taken from the final transaction for booking a trip or selling equipment. By providing a marketplace for suppliers and services to sell to customers, companies will lower costs to compete with other companies on the site, thus lowering overall cost for the consumer.

Lastly, the convenience of planning a trip and have supplies ready for the adventurer will be reflected in the price. Although it may be cheaper to purchase these items by themselves, consumers who want the convenience of an easy trip planning experience would be willing to pay for the service.

Place:

[xxx] will exist as an online site, with a call center for basic customer service. The service that [xxx] provides is to create a community and a marketplace for people who are interested in adventure travel, as well as companies who specialize in services or products catering to adventure travel.

Advertising of the website will happen in traditional fashion, such as magazines or flyers in stores, as well as e-flyers and web banners on related websites. However the biggest source of advertisement will be user created content promoted on youtube and other social media sites. Users are encouraged to document their trips and post videos. (see promotions)

Product:

Fundamentally, [xxx] is an online marketplace for companies and individuals to advertise their products, and consumers to buy them. The actual product sold by [xxx] is the forum for trips to be planned and booked. The personalized trip planning forms assist in the sale of equipment as well as trips. The value created by [xxx] are as follows:

For the customer

- Convenience of information and reviews
- Ease of finding trips based on user requirements
- Ability to plan out needs for the trip, including equipment and food
- Additional user reviews to add value and confidence in the service or products
- Other user experiences to drive the user to share their own adventures
- Convenience of purchasing or renting equipment that can be delivered to home or picked up

For the merchant or service

- A customer base to sell their goods and services
- A way to compete with larger companies that have a large presence in urban centers
- A way to reach a larger audience
- Data from customer use and reviews, as well as number of clicks
- A way to stay relevant and on top of a quickly changing marketplace

Promotion:

The success of [xxx] will rely on its online presence, and its user base. At the outset, aggressively advertising through social media is ideal. Interest and exposure can be created by posting videos of actual adventure travel made by individuals on trips using devices like 'go pro' and other recording devices.

Sponsorship from supply companies and vendors will assist in promoting the community as users of the gear are often loyal to the company. This will allow the companies to compete for more customers by directly advertising or selling their products on [xxx]. In addition to this, a presence at actual events like outdoor shows and