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Marketing 355

5 May 2023

Amuz - A Travel App for the Busy Explorer

Executive Summary

In our research into Amuz, we found the app to be very interesting and think it is a great idea that can use a marketing boost in order to gain more users and begin being used on a broader scale. Through our project, we detailed the business and the goal of the mobile app, while also discussing its target audience. Along with that, we detailed some recommendations for the owner, Jim, to implement in order to get the word out about Amuz to those who are looking to gain more knowledge on the history and artifacts that they are viewing when they travel. A couple of the recommendations listed are the use of hashtags, which will allow travelers to see the app, along with posting content to TikTok and other social media sites through micro-influencers in hopes that some of the posts will gain popularity and Amuz's user count will grow. Amuz has a chance to become very popular, and we detailed in this project a strategy that may allow Amuz to hit the ground running.

Overview of Business

The Amuz app features curated travel experiences for busy explorers. It provides descriptions, photos, videos, aerials, and immersive images for hyper-local lists of places to eat and drink, as well as unique things to do and see. The app is designed to help travelers explore and create memorable adventures by providing an efficient and simple way of discovering

nearby places. Overall, the Amuz app offers a variety of features and tools that serve to make travel planning and exploration easier and more enjoyable.

Jim has several business goals for Amuz. He prioritizes building a trusted brand that is known for creating the best travel experiences. Additionally, he wants to continue making improvements to the app and expand to new locations, which he believes will kickstart user growth. Jim's digital marketing goal is to increase social media effort and engagement, as he has been solely reliant on organic growth and word of mouth marketing since the release of the app. Specifically, he mentioned his desire for Amuz to have a better presence on Instagram and TikTok. Jim hopes that the combination of his business and digital marketing efforts will lead to a larger user base and notoriety for the app, with an end goal of enhancing travel experiences for as many curious explorers as possible.

Digital Marketing Audit

The current digital marketing efforts by Amuz are, to be frank, rather minimal. In our meeting, Jim told us that, thus far, he has really only been relying on "organic growth" of the app and platform through word of mouth. Word of mouth is arguably the most trusted source for most people, so the app has been able to build a small user base tailored to its niche market and audience. In terms of actual digital marketing, there are only two things: Instagram and the Amuz website itself. The Instagram profile characteristics are as follows: 44 followers, 529 following, and 107 posts. Given the low follower count, the amount of posts is great, as the limited number of followers are able to keep up with Amuz and what they are posting. Another thing that is good about Amuz' Instagram is that within each post, they tag anywhere from one to six larger Instagram accounts that directly relate to the post. For example, in the post about the Morelli House in Las Vegas, Amuz tags "vegas" and "archdigest" (**Exhibit 1**). Regarding the

website itself, the best feature is the “ignite” blog, where any user of the app can create a post about a specific restaurant, historical landmark, or building and give background on whatever that place may be. They can include writing, pictures, and even videos to give a description of this place that is on the Amuz app. This has overall helped to create more engaged users on the app.

Despite the things that are working well, there are definitely some shortcomings. On Instagram, many of the posts are quite random. They range from being more targeted (like the Morelli House) to being something as simple as an overhead picture or video of a certain city or area in Wisconsin. Although these are aesthetically pleasing, they do not curate to the desired audience, or really ignite any sense of what the Amuz app does for the user. Moreover, the posts are very sporadic and infrequent, with the most recent post being in July of 2022 and the second most recent post being from May of 2021. Additionally, within the blog, the posts are also random. There is no real incentive for anyone to post here, with many of them coming from student projects. While this is great, there is an opportunity for Amuz to utilize this blog to attract more users, which we will discuss later.

In terms of competition, there is not much. Jim stated that his competition starts at the top with large companies like Google, Bing, and Yahoo, where travelers will simply type their travel-related questions into these search engines. Then, it boils down to more bundled travel packages (i.e. Costco) and more niche efforts. Nonetheless, Jim said that Amuz is different than these competitors as it dives much deeper into specific areas and experiences.

Analyzing online listening for Amuz was not easy. As stated earlier, Amuz does not have that large of a following online. The Instagram has just 44 followers, and each post only receives around ten likes, and rarely any comments. When people have left comments on their posts, they

have been good and positive, though. Additionally, on the app store, Amuz has good reviews (4.7 stars out of 5); however, there are only three reviews. On top of this, the most recent review is from three years ago, which made it very difficult for us to get a good sense of how the users feel today. However, when looking at the broader travel app industry, it was clear that people generally have positive sentiment towards travel apps. People love to leave reviews, many of which are positive. Overall, it was difficult to conduct a solid online listening analysis for Amuz given that the app is still in its early stages. Given the nature of this online listening analysis, we decided to dive deep into analyzing ways to utilize social media better for Amuz, which is the main thing that Jim highlighted in our meetings.

Target Market Online

Amuz is a mobile app that was created in order to improve travel for those looking to gain a better understanding of the sites in which they are visiting. The program's target audience is people of all ages and nationalities and can be used in a wide variety of countries to experience different cultures and artifacts.

The mobile app is intended for people who value information and learning and are looking for a deeper meaning in their travels. Amuz provides a unique and comprehensive view of various travel websites and helps users explore destinations in a more meaningful way. The app offers a wide variety of information on different destinations, artifacts, art and different cultures.

Amuz's target audience is not limited to a certain age group, gender or cultural background. Rather, it is aimed at anyone who wants to learn and explore while traveling. When speaking with the founder, Jim, we learned that he has always found joy in learning more about the history of different travel destinations. His target audience is basically anyone who is also

passionate about the history behind the places they visit while vacationing. Whether you are traveling alone or with friends or family, the app offers a useful and informative guide for everyone. The app's interface is intuitive and easy to use, making it accessible to all types of travelers, including those who may not be tech savvy. In short, Amuzi's target audience is people who want more content and an engaging travel experience.

Measurement/Evaluation

An easy way for Amuz to track whether or not our marketing efforts are working is simply by tracking the number of downloads since we launch the marketing campaign. By tracking these numbers, we can then compare the growth rate from the period before the campaign versus the period after. Another good way to track our efforts is by monitoring the engagement on social media accounts. At this time, Amuz only has an Instagram account that currently has 44 followers and gets around 5 likes per post. Monitoring the follower growth and like/comment activity on the posts is a good way to see if our marketing efforts are starting to be successful, on both Instagram and the Tik Tok account that we plan to create. Lastly, along with tracking downloads of the app, it is important to also look at interaction within the app. Looking at how many people are leaving reviews of a restaurant, museum, or any activity they did in a city on the app compared to how many people were leaving reviews before the campaign, will show how successful efforts have been.

Not everything always works out as planned, and there are ways to tweak efforts if things are not going the way they were expected to. If there is not as much interaction organically on the Instagram and Tik Tok pages as hoped for, it could be beneficial to have some promotional efforts posted on the page. An example of this would be to post a promotional campaign for a free meal at a partnered restaurant on the social media pages. Tell followers that you have to like,

comment, and share the post and then you will be included in the drawing for the chance to win the free meal. This incentivizes people to interact with and share your posts, as it does not cost them anything but there is upside for them. In turn, this gets your social media pages and name out there and talked about more.

If the app does not have as much interaction or downloads as hoped for, a way to tweak the efforts would be to not focus as much on downloads, but instead focus on fostering and building up the community you already have. The best way to get an app out there is through word of mouth and recommendations from users. By turning your focus internally and constantly interacting with people who already use your app, you will establish brand loyalty that will greatly accelerate expansion efforts. You can do this by having the Amuz team post about their own experiences and leave reviews, and also comment on other people's.

Now looking at some benchmarks in order to quantify whether efforts are working or not, here are some baseline numbers. As of right now, Amuz has in the 5 figures when it comes to users and the app has been around for 4 years. Assuming that the app has seen roughly 10,000 new users per year, with little to no marketing efforts, a good benchmark would be 20,000 new users in the next year after the campaign. On top of that, the goal for user interaction should be between 8-10% of total users. Next, looking at social media pages, the current Instagram is at 44 followers. After marketing efforts, the goal should be to have reached at least 500 followers by the end of the first year. With the Tik Tok page, we should also hope for 500 new followers by the end of the year. These numbers serve as a benchmark; anything above is great and anything below should be looked at and potentially modified.

Recommendations:

1. Revamp Instagram to increase engagement from desired target market

2. Utilize TikTok to create short videos for potential virality
3. Incentivize downloads through “free itinerary” offer, plus referral option
4. Implement a share option within the blog to increase awareness and reach

Amuz has great potential for creating an Instagram page that significantly benefits its marketing efforts. As discussed in the Digital Marketing Audit, the company’s Instagram page has a low follower count and many posts. As mentioned previously, even though the page posts a decent amount, each post has low engagement considering likes and comments. We believe revamping the Instagram page can increase engagement from Amuz’s desired target market. There are several ways to approach creating a successful page, but we have narrowed down three key strategies we suggest should be implemented: collaborating and partnering with micro-influencers, posting content that curates to the desired target market and provides a sense of what the app can do for its user, and use of hashtags.

Micro-influencers

For context, Amuz would aspire to work with travel influencers. Amuz defined their purpose as “curated travel experiences for busy explorers.” Partnering with micro travel influencers is a great way for Amuz to connect with their desired target market. Micro influencers have smaller but highly engaged followings. As a smaller company, partnering with these influencers would be cost effective and provide partners who have high engagement and close contact with Amuz’s desired community – curious travelers. According to Forbes, micro influencers provide genuine content, cult-like loyalty, and authentic audience connection. These features would benefit Amuz as travel apps rely heavily on trust.

Making Posts Scheduled and Engaging

As discussed previously, Amuz's Instagram posts are currently sporadic and random. Amuz should focus on posting frequently and on a structured schedule. Travel apps rely on trust and reliability of information, and posting on a regular basis helps the audience get to know you, which in turn builds trust and personal connection. Consistency also ensures that followers stay engaged and attentive.

Additionally, their posts don't provide a sense of what Amuz offers the user. Amuz should implement posts that exhibit features of the app and the benefits provided for travelers. This will enable followers and other Instagram users to understand the purpose of the app.

Use of Hashtags

Lastly, Amuz should implement hashtags on each of their posts. Their hashtags should be niche and revolve around the travel industry. According to Forbes, "Studies have shown that posts with 11 or more hashtags get nearly 80% interaction." Hashtags can help people find Instagram posts that they are interested in, boost impressions, and expand reach outside of your network. Amuz can benefit from more people seeing the page, as this can lead to more followers and recognition.

Utilize TikTok

TikTok videos have become increasingly popular over the course of the past few years, with many companies investing hundreds of thousands of dollars into sponsored videos and collaborations in hopes of promoting their business. We think Amuz has the capabilities to do this same thing without spending large sums of money. Travel is a genre within TikTok that has millions of viewers on the videos each day. In order to gain these viewers, the videos posted need to go "viral", which can happen for a variety of reasons. Whether Amuz wants to contact creators or post videos themselves, the TikToks, of a travel destination per say, have to be eye-catching

and subtly reference the app as the reason for this experience. Viral videos have done wonders for hundreds of companies, and Amuz could be next.

Incentivize Downloads

Our recommendation for a way to incentivize people to download is to offer them a free itinerary from a city of their choice when they download the app. When traveling, it is often difficult for people to plan their days out and find things to fill their time. As of right now, most people will just google search “best things to do in X city”. This leads to a lot of information and places to sift through on the internet that you have no idea how credible the reviews are or not. By offering customers who download the app a free, itemized itinerary of things to do that are catered to their interests, it takes away that hassle of planning things out.

To lay out how this would look, posts could be made to the Amuz social media accounts advertising this offer of an itemized, free itinerary. Once a user downloads the app, they enter what city they are going to, and what they want to do in that city. This includes things like going on a hike, going to a nice restaurant, seeing a museum etc. They input the activities they want, then Amuz develops an itinerary from the highest rated of those categories on the app, as well as include reviews made on the app to further prove the locations in the itinerary are high rated ones. By providing this to users, once they have an enjoyable trip using what Amuz provided for them, they will likely spread the word to friends and family, as well as use the app whenever they go on their next trip.

Overall, in order to retain customers and get interaction on the app, it has to be able to provide users with a service of some sort. As of right now, there are not enough users on the app to get to the level of posting, blogging, and sharing of experiences that is the goal. By offering

this itemized itinerary that takes away the stress of planning a trip for people, they will be significantly more likely to interact with and use the app in the future.

Lastly, implementing a share option within the blog would prove wildly beneficial for Amuz. As discussed earlier, Amuz has the “ignite” blog where users can post about a particular place on the Amuz app. However, currently these blog posts are only available on Amuz’s website. While this is great, Amuz could expand their user base, reach more people, and increase awareness of the app if they had a share option included within these blog posts. An article on woorank says “integrating elements could be in the form of social media buttons that help your readers engage with your blog (Facebook likes, Twitter follows)” and that “share buttons help readers share your content and help readers comment on your blog.” The article also does mention how too many buttons can be overkill, so we suggest that Amuz only utilize share buttons to three social media platforms: Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. By doing this, Amuz would instantly increase their social media reach and therefore gain more users and raise more awareness for the app, which is a key goal for Amuz.

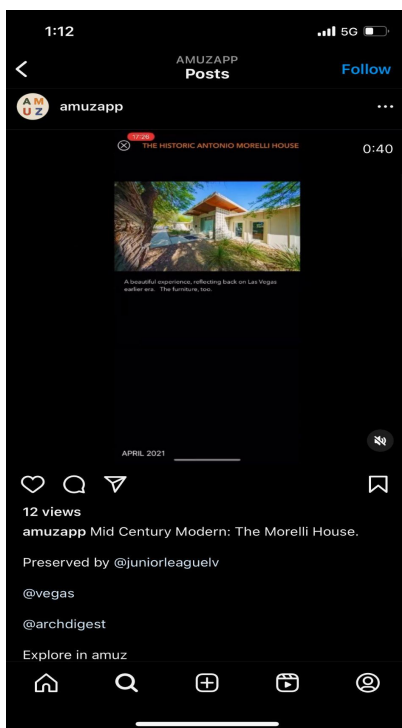
Conclusion

In conclusion, we feel by implementing these recommendations into the Amuz digital marketing strategy, you will find success in growing the number of users who both download and interact with the app. Amuz is a great app that has a lot of potential and a clearly identifiable market. The only way to reach the numbers we are hoping for, is to implement this digital marketing strategy, and once enough people are using the app, let it grow organically from there.

Exhibits/Appendices

Exhibit 1 - Instagram Post

Amuz app



Mid Century Modern: The Morelli House

Link to post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/COGssjDjqFJ/>

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