THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
IOWA INITIATIVE
FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

City of Maquoketa
Marketing & Branding Campaign

Shelby Cain
Jacinta Jargo

Amy Mass
Jessica Welser

Faculty Advisor: Peggy Stover
Marketing Institute Seminar| Tippie College of Business Marketing Institute
Community Project Lead: Nic Hockenberry, Jackson County Economic Alliance

In partnership with
East Central Intergovernmental Association

MAQUOKETA
ONE·OF·A·KIND

ECIA

JACKSON COUNTY
ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

This publication may be available in alternative formats upon request.

Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities
Provost's Office of Outreach and Engagement
The University of Iowa
111 Jessup Hall
Iowa City, IA, 52241
Email: iisc@uiowa.edu
Website: http://iisc.uiowa.edu/

Executive Summary

Date: April 24, 2017

To: Nicolas Hockenberry, Assistant Director; Jackson County Economic Alliance

From: Amy Mass

cc: Jessica Welser

Shelby Cain

Jacinta Jargo

Peggy Stover

Travis Kraus

Rene DeAnda

Re: City of Maquoketa Executive Summary

This report summarizes key findings, implications, and recommendations that emerged from primary and secondary research conducted in order to increase tourism within the City of Maquoketa.

Contents

Objective

The object of this report is to outline our findings from our eight months of consultation work. The scope of our project was to research key findings and develop recommendations to establish a communication strategy for the City of Maquoketa. The goal of the project is to not only increase tourism for the city, but increase overall awareness of the city.

Problem Statement

Our problem statement for the City of Maquoketa's Communication Strategy is as follows:
Despite being the largest city and county seat for Jackson County, the number of tourists in Maquoketa has stayed relatively stagnant since 1990. In order to reverse this trend and increase tourism by 10% by the year 2020, the City of Maquoketa needs to create a marketing communication plan to become more effective in attracting tourism.

Gathering data for the City of Maquoketa's tourist attraction was inconsistent, because very few attractions in Maquoketa had concrete or digitized data. We tracked tourism mostly based on area hotel tax collections, which have remained stagnant since 1990. With this communication strategy, we are looking to increase tourism in the City of Maquoketa at a similar rate to small towns of similar size to Maquoketa. We looked at several towns and cities of similar size in Iowa to find a rate of tourism growth reasonable for the City of Maquoketa by changing and expanding communications about the City's offerings and attractions.

Secondary Research

In the first semester, we looked at tourist information within the state of Iowa, analyzed data from Maquoketa businesses (voluntarily given information), hotel/motel tax data, branding guidelines and various other sources of information to conclude our key findings from our secondary research.

Key Findings

Throughout secondary research conducted, we concluded there was three major key findings pertaining to Maquoketa and our project scope.

1. Perception: This key finding was addressed by internal and external entities of the city. In terms of Maquoketa, it was found that there are some negative perceptions surrounding the city's image and name. The tagline "One of a Kind", does not speak to the city's attractions, location, or family-friendly, community-based atmosphere. While it does relate to the city's history as it is the only "Maquoketa" in the country, few know this fact, making it a poor representation of the city.

2. Inconsistent Brand & Message: Maquoketa has multiple websites, print media, social media pages, and organizations representing the city's brand and image. Yet, it was found that many of these pages don't share the same message and the use of the brand across these platforms is inconsistent.

3. <u>Lack of Awareness:</u> While Maquoketa has diverse attractions, is very affordable, and has everything within a proximity, there is a lack of awareness for knowledge about the city itself, and what's going on once you are there. Not only are people unaware of Maquoketa, and where the city is located, but people are unaware of events, attractions and where those attractions are located within the city itself.

SWOT of Maquoketa

After establishing our key findings, we organized and inventoried the information we gathered into a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis.

Internal

Strengths

When people travel for weekend trips or day trips the biggest attraction spanning all demographics is outdoor recreation. Luckily, the City of Maquoketa has an abundance of outdoor recreation, particularly the caves, already drawing people to the area. From the Maquoketa Caves, to the Maquoketa River, to the two golf courses, these attractions will be very important to direct attention towards the City of Maquoketa, using them as a platform to drive visitors to the downtown area.

Tourists are look for unique attractions. Looking at the main attractions in Maquoketa, there are several unique attractions to Eastern Iowa. The 61 Drive in movie theater is one of only three remaining in the state of Iowa. As well there are many unique art attractions that make Maquoketa an art hub of Jackson County such as the Ohnward Center, the Hurstville interpretive center, the art experience, and the Figge Art Museum in town. These unique features make Maquoketa stand out from the other small towns in the area, and should be used as features to attract neighboring populations to the area.
The City of Maquoketa has a city bargain index of 114. This means as a city, Maquoketa has 14% more establishments with bargains and deals than other towns of the similar size. This feature is extremely attractive to price sensitive families on the road. Promoting the feature of being an inexpensive outing will draw nearby families who want to travel, but don't have the budget to go to larger cities which tend to be costlier.

Weaknesses

Because the City of Maquoketa is smaller and just underwent a downtown revitalization there is a lack of retail trade options for tourists to shop at or browse. It does not help that the layout of the City of Maquoketa is decentralized from some of its major attractions. People may visit the caves or the drive-in movie theater, but may not know the town has more to offer for retailing options.
There is a lack of awareness and advertising for the events and about the town in general. Advertising is very strong internally for citizens of Maquoketa to attend their own city events (through the town newspaper and posters around town), but there needs to be more done to advertise events externally. We noticed between our internal and external surveys the audience for Maquoketa's events and festivals does not get a lot of reach outside of their immediate area within the town. Our communication strategy

will give advice on how to widen the scope of event advertising to draw in visitors from across Iowa and neighboring states.

The last weakness we found was the lack of restaurant awareness. If people are staying overnight or even staying for a long day trip in Maquoketa they need to have restaurant options. An advisor to the MI board said they had visited Maquoketa to go kayaking, and afterwards they were looking around town for a place to eat. They were not able to find a place to eat and eventually ended up driving back home and eat because there were no places in Maquoketa they saw to sit down and eat. Restaurants are crucial for attracting tourists and travelers to the area. Because of the decentralization of the attractions in Maquoketa, there needs to be better connections made between these attractions and restaurants to keep people in Maquoketa longer. Extending tourists' stay in Maquoketa by providing more information on things to do, see, and eat, at every attraction site will ensure more revenue is generated from tourism and more repeated visits from people who were interested in coming back to try other attractions in Maquoketa.

External

Opportunities

One of the biggest opportunities for Maquoketa is the untapped partnership between the city and its attractions. There are attractions in Maquoketa bringing in several tourists, the problem is from these attractions, tourists are not coming into the downtown area of the city. Creating a stronger partnership between these two entities will give Maquoketa a more cohesive feel and in turn increase tourism and tourism generated revenue for the city. Making a stronger partnership between the city and its attractions would include better accounting of how many visitors to add to a city-wide data base, consistent City of Maquoketa and travel Maquoketa branding at each attraction to help tourists navigate their day and weekend trips. Pulling attractions on board with goals set for increasing tourism city-wide would help keep messaging more consistent.

Maquoketa is located just off some of the largest highways and interstates in the state of Iowa. Having the location, that is very close to larger cities and easy to find by major highways is an advantage for people trying to find Maquoketa. This location makes the town day trip and weekend trip friendly. The standard day trip is about 100 miles or about two hours and the average weekend trip is about 300 miles or 4 hours. With Maquoketa's location, a day trip is all eastern Iowa, parts of Illinois, and even goes up to Madison, Wisconsin. The weekend trip radius includes all the state of Iowa, most of Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and parts of Minnesota, Indiana, and Michigan.

The downtown revitalization is an opportunity for Maquoketa to expand on the retail offerings in the downtown area. With the updated utilities and streets, hopefully this will attract small business owners which will interest tourist who are looking for retail options. The downtown revitalization has made Maquoketa easier to walk around and is working on making the storefronts that are closed to look less distraught. This is a great opportunity for bettering the friendly perception of Maquoketa and an opportunity to incorporate more murals and greenery to help the town appear more *welcoming*.

Threats

One of the largest external threats to Maquoketa's tourism are the surrounding larger cities with more attractions and a larger population. These cities have the potential of drawing away tourist from Maquoketa because there are more options for places to stay and dine. Although this is a threat to Maquoketa, the city should focus on what advantages differentiate themselves from the larger cities nearby, such as better prices, family friendly community, and unique attractions not found in the larger cities.

When we originally were presented with the background information on Maquoketa and speaking with the internal stakeholders group, we understood there were possibly some negative perceptions around the City of Maquoketa and Jackson County. This is something we will have to directly address and counter to overcome, and let the area know Maquoketa is a safe, friendly place all ages can enjoy.

Primary Research

After gathering secondary research, we began conducting primary research in the form of an internal survey, an external survey, and a focus group. From this data we were able to develop a target market, draw on conclusions and key findings, and make recommendations for a marketing communication strategy.

Internal Survey Demographics

The purpose of our internal survey was to gauge perceptions of the City of Maquoketa from insiders currently living in Maquoketa. This survey was distributed to the Maquoketa Can! Facebook group, the Retro Maquoketa Facebook group, and was shared on various personal Facebook accounts. We had 180 valid survey responses, with 109 of the respondents currently living in Maquoketa. The demographic breakdown was 77% female and 23% male. The age breakdown is outlined below. Most respondents were between the ages of 40-60 years old.

4.13%
6.61%
2.48%
13.22%
9.09%
11.57%
9.09%
21.49%
22.31%

Under 20 years old
21-25 years old
26-30 years old
31-35 years old
36-40 years old
40-50 years old
50-60 years old
60-70 years old
Over 70 years old
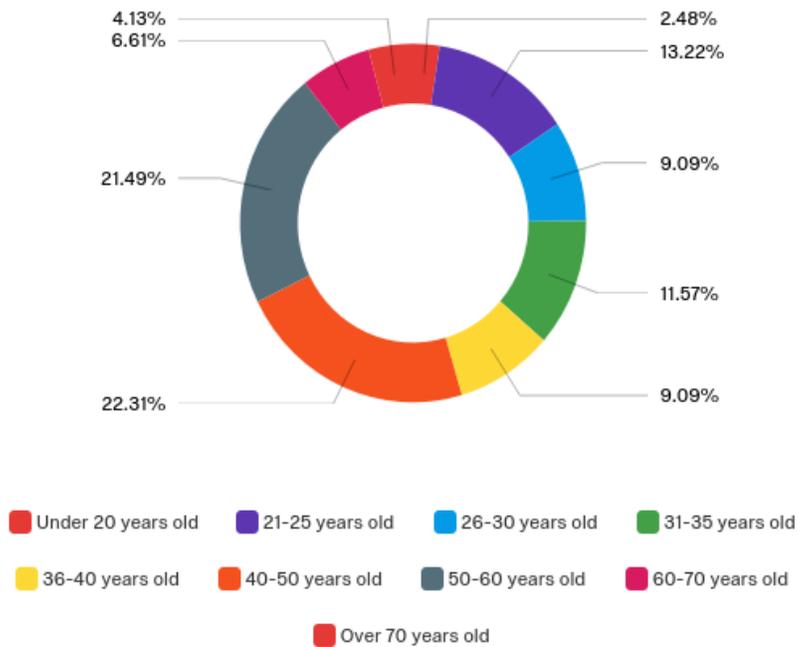
External Survey Demographics

The purpose of our external survey was to gather general travel insights as well as perceptions on visiting the City of Maquoketa. The survey was distributed through the Internal Review Board (IRB) at the University of Iowa to students, faculty, and staff. It was also distributed through various personal Facebook accounts and through E-mail blast to visitors' bureaus of surrounding cities, with a majority in Eastern Iowa. We received a total of 1,501 valid responses. The demographic breakdown was 70% female and 30% male. The age breakdown is outlined below. The largest age range of respondents was between 41-60 years old.
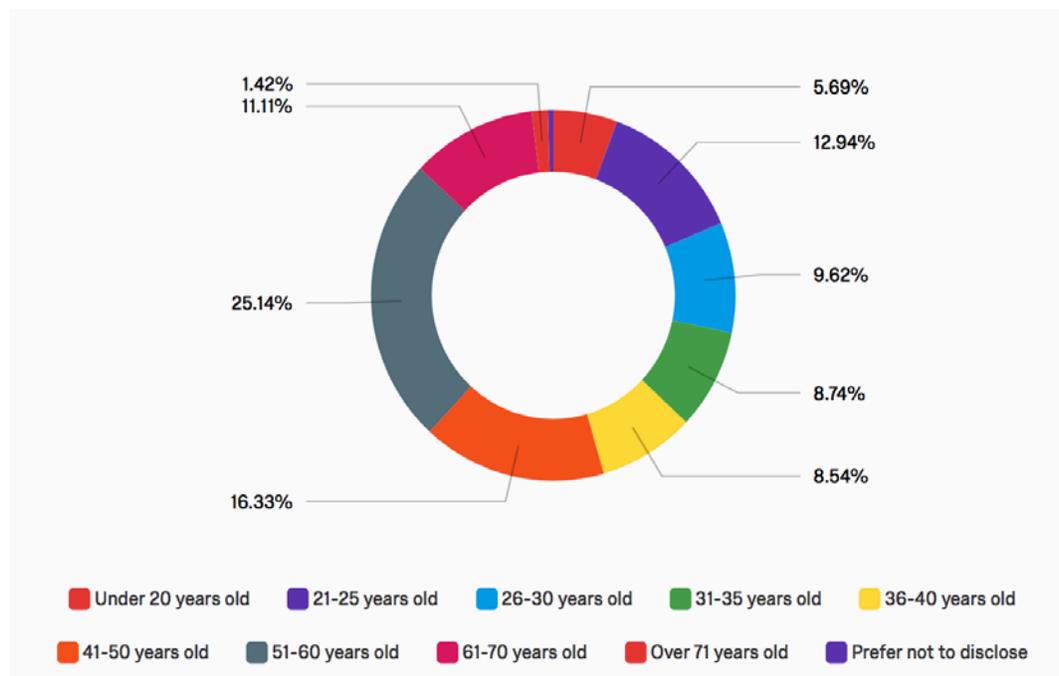
Focus Group

We also conducted a focus group with the stakeholder committee that we were given, which was comprised of city leaders. During this focus group, we asked questions regarding perceptions of Maquoketa and we asked opinions on the city's current logo and tagline. Overall, we wanted to have a better understanding of Maquoketa's identity. We found that residents have a family history for living in Maquoketa, the biggest assets of the community are outdoor recreation, rural Maquoketa, fine arts, and downtown, and we learned that areas of improvement were the perceptions Maquoketa is known for. When we asked, what people should know about Maquoketa, we received answers such as family friendly activities, lots to do, art scene, and fun. Lastly, we learned that the Chamber of Commerce plays a large role in disseminating information through email, website, and social media.

Key Findings

After conducting our primary research, we developed 6 key findings. A detailed report of the survey questions and responses will be provided separately. These key findings are general findings based on information we gathered from the surveys. The key findings are explained below and they serve as the foundation for the recommendations we developed for the marketing communication strategy.

1. Lack of Branding: There is a lack of branding and brand promise throughout Maquoketa. There are different logo colors, fonts, and usage. The City of Maquoketa is not represented well through current branding materials and it is confusing what Maquoketa's message is.

2. Disconnect between Internal and External Perception: The tagline "One of a Kind" was addressed within the stakeholder group and throughout members of the community through a survey. We found a split between stakeholders who liked the tagline and those who didn't. We also found

that 65% of residents who took our survey did not feel that the current tagline represented Maquoketa.

3. <u>Absence of Marketing Materials:</u> Travel guides and press kits for travel writers are hard to find. Even with the current travel guide, the layout is confusing and it is very text heavy. Travel guides should have a simple layout with the essential information pertaining to tourism. With the absence of marketing materials, we found that one of the main reasons people have not visited Maquoketa is because of a general lack of awareness for location, events, and attractions.

4. <u>Ineffective City Website:</u> When looking at the City of Maquoketa website, it is hard to navigate. There is no tourism information and no link to find the tourism information, which is found on the Chamber website. There should be a separate Travel website, with information for tourists and visitors that is easy to find and navigate. The current Maquoketa websites are also lacking Search Engine Optimization (SEO). When searching terms in Google such as "outdoor recreation in Iowa", "outdoor recreation in Eastern Iowa", "hiking in Iowa", "things to do outdoors in Iowa", Maquoketa should be a top search result, however it does not even populate on the first page of results.

5. <u>Underutilized Social Media:</u> The City of Maquoketa needs better use of social media. Currently, Facebook is the main platform that both the City and Chamber are utilizing. However, there is inconsistent use and text heavy posts. The City and Chamber should both be promoting events and activities happening in Maquoketa, not just to community members, but to a broader audience. We also suggest expanding to platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat because these resonate with our target demographics.

6. <u>No Marketing Position:</u> Lastly, there is no marketing position. This position is crucial to continue success. This person would have a background in marketing and would need little training. They would be responsible for managing social media, maintaining Maquoketa's brand, working with groups and businesses to promote attractions and events, facilitate data collection, and measure campaign success.

Target Market

Based on the information that we gathered from our secondary and primary research, we created 2 target markets. The first target market is the Day Tripper. The Day Tripper will travel roughly 100 miles (2 hours) in one direction. They consist of families between the ages of 31-60 years old with 1-2 children. About a quarter of this group takes a day trip once every month, and they bring their children. The last trip they took to Maquoketa was 1-3 years ago. When they are traveling, they look for family friendly activities. They also rely on information from past experiences, the city website, and word of mouth recommendations. This group needs information on restaurants in the city they travel to.

The second target market is the Weekender. The Weekender will travel roughly 300 miles (4 hours) in one direction. They consist of young adults between the ages of 21-30, and empty nesters aged 61 and over. This group takes weekend trips every 3 to 6 months, however, the young adults are more likely to take trips every month. For almost 30% of them, it has been more than 5 years since they have visited Maquoketa. Many travel by word of mouth recommendations, but the young adults rely heavily on travel

resources. When using social media, 75% use Facebook as the medium to look up travel information. This group is looking for outdoor recreation, and they will need information on restaurants and overnight accommodations.

Logo & Brand Identity

The scope Maquoketa's rebranding included redoing the town logo. Looking at the current logo for the City of Maquoketa the MI team was unable to identify what the graphic image was supposed to represent. As well, with the lock up of the city name, the tagline, and the graphic the font of the logo seemed very regal and cold. The MI team had a branding discussion with City of Maquoketa stakeholders, city leaders interested in helping develop a new graphic identity. When this group was asked to identify what the existing graphic was supposed to represent, none of the members could tell us and some were even surprised that the graphic was the logo for the city.

The MI team discussed questions with the group in a group format as well had members of the stakeholder group write down their thoughts. From this session, the MI team was able to discern a lot of information about the City of Maquoketa's identity. Many residents of Maquoketa live in Maquoketa because they have family history in Maquoketa, to them Maquoketa has a lot of family history and means a lot to them personally. When asked about the biggest assets Maquoketa has, the stakeholder group said they have abundant outdoor recreation, rural Maquoketa and the agricultural background of Maquoketa meant a lot to the area, as well the community of Maquoketa is a huge asset for the stakeholders with features such as the YMCA, the fine arts community, downtown events, and the diversity of things to do. When the stakeholders were asked about areas of improvement they acknowledged there were some negative perceptions about the town, such as drugs and crime, they

would like to improve. The stakeholder group said people should know the City of Maquoketa is family friendly, there is lots to do, Maquoketa is fun and has an arts scene. All this feedback was considered when creating the new logo, tagline, and branding packet.

We considered the tagline to see if there were any alternatives to "One of a Kind", the current tagline, that represented the city more. In our research into other taglines of towns in the area, we found that most of the taglines are more specific to the geographic area of the town. For example, the tagline for the City of Davenport is, "Marvels on the Mississippi." When we sent out the internal survey to ask residents of the City of Maquoketa if they felt like their current tagline, "One of A Kind" represented them, 65% had said no. Residents of Maquoketa felt that "One of A Kind" was too one dimensional and said more about the name of the town rather than what the town means and represents. Some alternatives the Marketing Institute team suggested includes: Beyond the Caves, The Heart of the Midwest, Experience the Best of Iowa, and A Break by the Byway. For the purposes of developing the new logo, the stakeholder committee has chosen to stick with "One of A Kind" but revisiting these alternatives might be useful in the future.

In the first draft of approaches for the City of Maquoketa logo, we provided a wide variety of options based on the preliminary information we received about the City. After we developed our first drafts, we reviewed the drafts with the selected stakeholders. There were more graphically focused options, more streamlined options, and options more like the original logo. When it came to revisions, the stakeholder committee decided to move forward with the logo option that was brighter in its color palette but also subtly hinted at the color pallet of the caves without making it the focus, the font was playful and clean, the area's topography is used as an influence with the agricultural rows depicted in the "Q," but then the line through the "Q" is extended through the rest of the logo to reference the rolling hills found in eastern Iowa. With this new logo, the designer has included a branding guide with clear guidelines on logo use to maintain its brand integrity and make sure all applications of the logo are being executed in an effective way.

Communication Strategy

Here is the MI Communication Strategy for the City of Maquoketa. The main points of the communication strategy include maintaining a consistent brand, advertising and promotions, strategizing social media, and how to capitalize on events and festivals to bring in additional tourism and eventually meeting the goal established in the problem statement.

Consistent Brand

In the MI team's first phase of gathering secondary data and identifying all the marketing Maquoketa was currently doing, we gathered all of the Maquoketa travel resources and information available. However, one thing that stood out to us above all else was there was no consistent application of Maquoketa's logo and branding. Even between two similar travel guides, the City had no consistent image. A consistent image is important to let the reader/viewer know that the information they are looking at, is coming from

the City of Maquoketa through one unified information source. When Maquoketa's image is changed several different times on similar materials, people lose trust in the information being shared with them, or are doubtful of the information's source or possible helpfulness. Keeping the integrity of a consistent brand is a shortcut for people outside of Maquoketa to know the information is valid, and the city truly represents all the qualities apparent in their logo (family friendly, clean, fun, and engaging).

In the branding guide for the City of Maquoketa, the MI team included some pointers and examples on how to maintain the integrity of the brand in its applications:

<u>Do</u>
- Only use current versions of the logo
- Ensure the logo is legible against all backgrounds
- Only use high quality versions of the logo
- Keep the proportion the same

<u>Don't</u>
- Do not change or alter proportion
- Do not add outline to the logo
- To ensure legibility, it is recommended that you do not reproduce logo any smaller than 1-inch wide

In the branding guide, we included a few mock up of how the logo could be applied to different items the City might produce, such as shirts, city banners, and stationery. The new logo is very adaptable to all of these items as it comes in a full color, all black, and all white versions. Since most of the logo uses the MI team saw were on travel resources, in addition we included a mock up of a city website and a City of Maquoketa travel guide to show how the branding could be translated to these locations.

The Visit Maquoketa website and Travel Guide would be very streamlined with only information pertinent to travelers to Maquoketa. In the travel guide mockup, there are suggestions for how the information can be organized to be most helpful to tourists. There is a section for what to do in Maquoketa called, "Explore" that gives a list of things to do with short descriptions as well as a list of the annual events so people know when to come back to Maquoketa. There is an area for Maps to help people know where Maquoketa is in comparison to major road ways and the distance between some of the nearby attractions and Maquoketa. The travel guide would include information on places to stay, including details on where to camp. There would be a page of information on where to eat, since this information is needed for longer trips. We also included on the eat page a listing of the daily deals on places you can eat in Maquoketa, because the young families target market receiving this guide are looking to save money with more mouths to feed as well as Maquoketa already has restaurants offering special day-of-the-week deals that could be shared to a wider audience. Finally, on the back of the travel guide we included a coloring page so that families with young children could color in the back seat of the car while traveling, giving more attention to the travel guide, rather than it being something automatically lost after it is picked up. Since this travel guide is streamlined, only about 4-page front and back, it can be directly mailed without too hefty of a mailing or printing cost.

Advertising & Outreach

Throughout our primary research, it became apparent that the key deterrent from travelers visiting the City of Maquoketa it's their lack of awareness relating to events, attractions, and a general knowledge. To combat this weakness, the city and its attractions need to work together in building a comprehensive and inclusive public relations, advertising, and outreach campaign.

The first component of this strategy, is to align all marketing and communication materials to reflect the new brand of Maquoketa. This will include letter heads, business cards, and online presences. Additionally, if there are any local businesses that are using the current or an outdated version of the brand - they will also need to be provided with the new materials to ensure a consistent message.

As for advertising and outreach, the City will first need to focus on tackling the threat noted in the primary research and focus on improving awareness of Maquoketa. This has been possible avenues such as newspaper or radio messaging. The City also can capitalize online by improving its SEO result when "outdoor recreation in Eastern Iowa" is searched to appear in the top results on Google.

To improve SEO, we recommend Maquoketa encourages residents, business owners, attractions, and visitors to share their experiences on TripAdvisor and Google Reviews. Peer-to-peer reviews are the most trusted form of referrals which could assist with word-of-mouth marketing. Additionally, the information posted on these platforms could be used in marketing the positive things individuals are saying about the City of Maquoketa. Similarly, the City could identity the negative or problematic concerns being posted and proactively seek to remediate the situation. Through having peer-to-peer reviews, the City will begin to combat the negative perception of the town that is perceived internally as indicated in our primary research.

An additional advertising and outreach recommendation is to create a new, condensed travel guide focused on sharing only the key information travelers would be looking for in a day trip or weekend getaway: attractions, food, events, and lodging. The travel guide provided in the PowerPoint presentation is a suggested mock-up containing no real content related to the City of Maquoketa. Similarly, the town could consider launching a travel specific website or adding a new page to the City and Chamber page that clearly highlights where individuals seeking information about Maquoketa from a tourism standpoint could be relocated too.

Social Media

During our primary research, both internal and external surveys, indicated that there is an opportunity within social media for Maquoketa to improve its brand awareness and to start a community building culture. To implement this idea, we have outlined a strategy from Hootsuite - a six step process that will help identify the mission of the social outlet in addition to measuring and monitoring success. The six steps follow and more information can be found in Hootsuite's original post:
1. Create goals and objectives
2. Conduct a current audit of performance

3. Relaunch social media accounts
4. Find inspiration
5. Build a content plan and calendar
6. Post and monitor content

Create Goals and Objectives

The first step for the City of Maquoketa is to develop a clear strategy for all social media accounts, including the City of Maquoketa and the Chamber of Commerce. There are five major strategies organizations can apply:

- Branding - increase reach and awareness
- Community Building - boost social engagement
- Public Relations - reach new markets, segments
- Customer Service - gain keywords insights
- Leads and Sales - retarget potential customer to increase conversions

It is our recommendation for the City and Chamber to focus on community building and public relations. Through focusing on community building the town will be able to continue to build a community online that can attract larger markets, additionally individuals are more likely to engagement with a brand that engages with current users - such as posting comments or replies to inquiries. Through a public relations lenses, the town will be able to combat the lack of awareness both internally and externally.

When creating a social media strategy, the City needs to consider how many websites and accounts they want to manage and generate content for. While content can be reused across platforms it needs to be manipulated into different forms to cater to the strategy and target market of each platform.

When building the strategy, we have included our breakdown of ownership for the City and the Chamber. We believe the City should post government content, including meeting minutes, general city news, and family/citizen related updates. Due to the content and current posting frequency of the City of Maquoketa page, we anticipate a weekly post will allow for the City to improve its online presence.

On the other hand, the Chamber of Commerce will have ownership of posting content related to all business and economic development activities occurring in the town and nearby areas. Additionally, since Maquoketa does not have a specific tourism platform currently, we are encouraging the Chamber to post content or share content related to attractions in town and community based events to increase awareness for residents and potential tourists. A key recommendation is to create Facebook events when posting about events to allow for Facebook's algorithm to spread awareness and also allowing individuals to invite friends to the event. Similarly, we recommend the use of Canva, a free platform, to create visually appealing graphics related to social media posts.

Conduct a Current Audit of Performance

There are seven steps regarding the second step of the social media plan. Hootsuite, who created the plan, does offer free template downloads to assist with this step. Understanding current performances as well as other accounts associated to the Maquoketa brand will allow for the City and Chamber to ensure a consistent brand message. The seven steps follow:

1. Inventory Ownership - create a spreadsheet and write down all the social networks you own and the owner for each.
2. Look for False Pages - set up a Google search for any other social media profiles that is representing your company that you don't own.
3. Strategize Profiles - evaluate the needs for all your social media profiles, and create a mission statement for each.
4. Practice Consistent Branding - make sure all your accounts are on brand: proper profile photo, cover photo, icons, bios, and descriptions are proper and URL is correct
5. Manage Sensitive Information - centralized the ownership of passwords
6. Research New Platforms - create a process for how new channels will be established going forward and create a criterion

Relaunch Social Media Accounts

Currently the Maquoketa is primarily present on Facebook and its various websites. This is a great start for the City and when these platforms are becoming more stable, we have included recommendations on how the City and Chamber could expand into different social media platforms.

- Facebook - Share events and news stories; highlight local attractions and businesses by having a weekly feature
- Instagram - Share photos of people who are enjoying the natural landscape or Maquoketa and highlight local businesses
- Snapchat - City or Caves designated geo-filter to build awareness
- Website - Keep content that doesn't need continuous monitoring and maintenance; importance information regarding the town
- Twitter -Share news and interact with audience; monitor people seeking things to do in Maquoketa by providing recommendations
  - Not a priority addition to the social media portfolio because Twitter is experiencing a dwindling average daily user and it does not align with the strengths of the City of Chamber as well as the other platforms

Find inspiration

For inspiration, we suggest Maquoketa think local and broad. For example, the City and Chamber should be aware of how cities such as Dubuque, Davenport, Iowa City, and Cascade for instance are using their social media accounts to expand their audience reach. They should also seek smaller communities such as Galena, DeWitt, LeClaire, and Bellevue to see what trends or successes they are achieving. By seeking inspiration from successful cities and towns, Maquoketa can quickly improve its online presence and gain a mentoring or partnership with other communities seeking to improve their social media presence and

drive tourism. One website we found particularly well-designed was the City of Woodbine, Iowa. The sleek layout and easy to find events is something Maquoketa may want to consider if they are ever to complete a website revitalization.

Build a Content Plan and Calendar

There are multiple avenues Maquoketa can consider when starting a content plan and calendar. The content plan and calendar will assist the organization in development of engaging posts and also assign responsibility of each post to ensure timely updates are provided. There are key questions that will be addressed in developing the plan per post:

- What types of content you intend to post and promote?
- How often will you post content?
- Target audience for each type of content?
- Who will create the content?
- Who will promote and post the content?

When the questions have been answered, there are different methods that can assist with follow-through. The first is to schedule posts in Facebook itself. Along with this method it would be helpful to use designated social media calendar to highlight what posts are scheduled for which dates and who has ownership of them. A more streamline approached could be using a social media management platform such as Hootsuite which has functionality to post content automatically, schedule posts, and develop a plan.

Post and Monitor Content

Once the strategic plan is complete including each platform's objectives - it is time to test the theory. When posting content, it is equally important if not more to focus on measuring and monitoring which includes listening. There are three things that all social media accounts should be listening for your brand (anything related to Maquoketa), your competition (other towns in Iowa or outdoor recreation destinations), and your industry (tourism, outdoor recreation, small towns, Iowa). By understanding what is happening in those three realms you will be able to better understand your own social media presence.

Events & Festivals

Events and festivals are engaging and a great way to attract outsiders to a city. We came up with a comprehensive list of different types of events and festivals that are low cost and are occurring in towns similar in size to Maquoketa. The list includes a chalk art festival, film festival, music festival, wine festival, fall and winter festivals, Jackson county fair, community 5K, bake sale, farmer's market, etc. Maquoketa does currently host a few of the above, but we believe that adding more events will give travelers a reason to come to Maquoketa, outside of what is already offered in the city. We focused primarily on the first three.

The Chalk Art Festival would be a great event because Maquoketa has a strong art scene. This event is very low cost, and can involve the local Maquoketa Art Experience members, high school students,

professional artists, etc. This event involves drawing chalk art around a designated area, preferably downtown, and gathering the community and visitors to check out the creations.

The film festival would be a great event for Maquoketa because of the Drive-In 61 Theater. This is unique to Maquoketa as it is only 1 in 3 drive in theaters in Iowa. Throwback movies or movie premiers would attract visitors, and tickets would be sold. This type of event can attract visitors for an extended period, often requiring overnight accommodations if it is spread over a weekend.

Lastly, a music festival would be a great event to hold in Maquoketa at Codfish Hollow. In addition to the current events held at Codfish Hollow, music festivals are a great way to attract visitors. Music festivals require multiple bands and artists and are spread across multiple days. Tickets would be sold and some visitors would need overnight accommodations.

In addition to the events and festivals that we have recommended, we also recommend promoting these via Facebook Events. Facebook Events is a great tool to use because events can be promoted to specific audiences based on locations or interests, shared on timelines, and can be marked "going" or "interested in going" to maximize outreach. When someone marks an event as "going" or "interested in going", the event populates on that person's Facebook timeline and is automatically promoted to their network. In creating these Facebook Events, we also recommend using Canva to create the banner. Canva is a free design tool where graphics can easily be made. A graphic created with this tool (or similar tools) makes the event look professional and ensures more clicks.

Community Initiatives

In addition to communication strategies, we recommend adopting the following three community initiatives to create the most positive impact.

Collecting Attraction Data

When we began talking with the different attractions in Maquoketa, we quickly found that there is not a set way that data is gathered, if it is even gathered at all. This is a problem because to measure growth, there needs to be a starting point. We recommend that each attraction and event begin gathering data, to measure the growth of tourism in the years to come. This is a simple measure that can be achieved through implementing guest books, tracking ticket sales, tracking the number of individuals who marked "going" on Facebook, and tracking the number of individuals who "Checked-In" to specific events and attractions on Facebook. Moving forward, this information will be essential for measuring tourism growth.

Beautifying Downtown

Throughout the external survey, it became apparent people are currently not attached to Maquoketa, to overcome this problem we hope to attach people to Maquoketa through a "beautifying downtown" initiative, focusing on the native and historic elements to create a cohesive image for the city. Three

qualities that attached people to a place are: social offerings (events and places to meet), openness (how welcoming a place is) and area's aesthetics (physical beauty and green spaces).

Some short-term initiatives include:

- Banners: extending beyond the branding banners, to create banners for holidays and local events
- Murals: utilizing Maquoketa's many blank canvases (exterior building walls) to visually show Maquoketa's rich history, while demonstrating their art culture
- Expanding green spaces, or establishing a community garden
- Adding hanging or potted flower baskets

In terms of benefits to the city itself, "beautification of downtown" adds to home valuation, attracts business investment, is a strong driver for tourism, increases a city's GDP and helps to improve an overall reputation.

Outside of public/private funding, Maquoketa can raise money for these projects through:

- Grant applications
- Fundraising events ideas: silent auction/raffle, benefit concert, festival, 5K/10K, community cook-off, etc.
- Business/individual sponsorship: establishing sponsorship packages for local businesses/individuals to partake in, with financial donations going directly to beautifying initiatives and sponsorship/recognition based off the size of the monetary donation

Main Street America, is a nationally recognized organization focused on bringing a community's downtown together through historic assets and creating a cohesive vision and brand. Main Street America allows a town to apply for a short-term project or long-term partner basis. We recommend that Maquoketa apply to become a long-term partner with Main Street America to utilize their ideas, planning materials, assistance and evaluation program. Additionally, Main Street America can help examine the return on investment for each project. The city will receive training and educational materials, necessary to succeed and create one vision. Cities/towns of all sizes, from Woodbine, Iowa (population 1,459) to Maquoketa's neighbor, Dubuque, Iowa (population 58,253) have seen success through the Main Street America program. Within the state of Iowa in 2015 alone, for every $1.00 a city invested in Main Street America through public and private funds, there was an average return of $26.14 generated through: new businesses, new jobs and business expansion.

Marketing Coordinator or Manager Position

To continue the progress made thus far, Maquoketa should establish a marketing position within the Chamber of Commerce to manage: the marketing and communication strategies, travel guides, direct mailing initiatives, communication efforts, control social media, handle all public relations, promote attractions and local events, help facilitate and analyze data collection, and be the point person for the city. This position would serve as a brand liaison to ensure the brand's integrity is maintained throughout its use, and is used in solely positive manners. We recommend hiring a marketing manager or marketing

coordinator position, as they have experience in marketing, working across departments and within a supervisory role.

Additionally, the city could hire a marketing intern, either paid, or unpaid (typically receiving academic credit). While the intern would be short-term with little to no experience, during busy seasons this position could provide additional insight and help to ensure no project is left untouched.
Large and small cities alike have a marketing position within their Chamber to represent the town. Surrounding cities of Maquoketa have their own established marketing positions to focus on PR efforts, social media, event coordination and promotion, traditional marketing, attraction information and travel guides, local business promotion, brand management and tourism liaison.

City within Iowa	Position
Clinton	Marketing Coordinator
Dubuque	Marketing Chair
Quad Cities	Marketing Director
Bellevue	Program and Events Coordinator
LeClaire	Tourism Manager

Conclusion

Maquoketa has made several tremendous improvements to the city specifically with the downtown revitalization. Based off our secondary research, Maquoketa has the top sought after features individuals are looking for when planning a daytrip or weekend getaway: unique experiences, beaches and nature sites, affordable hotels, and ability to drive rather than fly. The City has many opportunities to leverage with its businesses and attractions to improve the overall awareness of events and things-to-do in Maquoketa.

Moving forward, the key recommendations:
- New & Consistent Branding
- Advertising & Marketing Materials
- Public Relations & Social Media
- Collecting Data
- Marketing Coordinator or Manager

Maquoketa has the right attractions and the momentum to make huge strides moving forward relating to improving tourism. We have appreciated the opportunity to work with the City and its constituents in developing a communication strategy with the intent of improving awareness and tourism within the City. All recommendations are based off consultant observations along with primary and secondary research which is provided. Moving forward, if Maquoketa has any questions, concerns, or comments they should be directed to Peggy E. Stover, Director of the Marketing Institute (peggy-e-stover@uiowa.edu).