Internet Marketing Plan (IMP)

For: WWII Soldier
www.wwiisoldier.com

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Contents

1: Introduction

Executive Summary

An executive summary is your plan in miniature (one page or shorter). The executive summary contains enough information for the readers to become acquainted with the full document without reading it. It contains a statement of purpose, your plan objectives, some background information, an overview of tactics and implementation, and the major conclusions. Someone reading an executive summary should get a good idea of main points of the document without becoming bogged down with details.

WWII Soldier has a strong, recognizable brand in the historical reproduction niche, however, by implementing some solid marketing techniques, the company could significantly increase sales and internet presence, along with reaching a larger percentage of the historical enthusiast, vintage lifestyle, and reenactor markets.

The company has not done any major online marketing beyond a few test advertisements, so despite the lack of a large marketing budget, WWII Soldier has plenty of room to grow.

The first step is to make some needed adjustments to the company's branding, such as rolling out a new logo across all channels and creating new business cards. The website also requires some tweaks to address search ability and browsing issues. There are some also necessary details that need to be addressed to bring the website up to legal code for CAN-SPAM, add company protections, and address other user concerns.

A large majority of the budget and emphasis for this plan will be on social media marketing, PPC, and SEO efforts, as well as establishing ongoing blogging and social media habits. Budget constraints mean that these efforts will take a front seat, while two major marketing campaigns will focus on elements of the company's brand story and should help expand the company's brand beyond the reenacting world. Testing mobile-optimized technologies will assist in driving customers from events to the website.

By introducing four strong marketing campaigns, WWII Soldier can increase its event presence, social media presence, as well as driving more traffic and sales to its website. "Operation Pathfinder" emphasizes social media traffic and attracts brand ambassadors, while getting valuable feedback from the reenactor community. "Prepare for the Invasion" drives event spectators online while educating reenactors and spectators about the D-day

invasion, and creates opportunities for viral, grassroots efforts. "Some dates are more important than others" is a video series that promotes general brand story and awareness and targets holiday sales. "Stuff Soldiers Threw Away" is an ongoing campaign that is designed to boost sales on a per-product level while creating a strong series of informational blog posts that should improve search rankings.

Although this plan seems ambitious for such a small company, combining some basic internet marketing best practices with strong marketing campaigns should result in a significant increase in social media likes and shares, increased search engine traffic, improved conversion rates, and an increase in both sales dollars and dollars per sale.

Organization & Product

Provide a brief overview of your company and product(s) / service(s) for which this marketing plan is being prepared.

WWII Soldier creates and manufacturers museum-quality reproductions and historically inspired items for use by museums, theatrical productions, living history organizations, and other military enthusiasts. WWII Soldier currently focuses on the period between 1939 and 1945. However, the company has some WWI products in development.

The business can be divided into three main product lines: T-shirts, rations and personal items, and gear and equipment. Around half of the company's products are made or assembled in-house, including its reproduction T-shirts, which are hand-printed using WWII techniques. The company also replicates original product packaging as well as the products themselves. The company's most popular product line is the reproduction T-shirts.

Like an old-time five and dime or department store, the company carries a wide assortment of toiletries and other personal products that are both period correct and useable. At historical events, WWII Soldier sets up a WWII-era post exchange (PX).

Please note that this is a historical reproduction company that focuses on the Second World War. Due to the nature of the business, many of the items are not politically correct for a modern audience. American and British items use stereotypes and racially charged imagery as part of their war-time propaganda. German items do carry the swastika and other marks associated with the Third Reich, which are legal but may be considered offensive. These items are sold as reproductions for historical and educational use only.

History

Provide a brief history and background about your product(s) / service(s) to give the reader a better understanding about how your product came to be.

WWII Soldier was started in 2010. However, the owner, Denise Deems, studied theater and began attending reenactments straight out of high school and began building and making props almost immediately.

She found an original 1940s photo of flight nurses wearing Air Corps T-shirts and thought they would be more comfortable than wool uniform shirts on a June day. The shirts were made by a local print shop and sold out of the back of her car to pay for gas and other event expenses.

After a failed attempt at starting a web design business, the owner was urged to start selling reproduction T-shirts. That year, the company introduced four original physical training T-shirt designs found in WWII-era photos or magazines.

Within a few months, the company added a line new, vintage style items in reproduction packaging. Reenactors were trying to create wooden blocks wrapped in paper to stand in for things like bars of soap, cigarettes, and candy bars because the originals were so easily damaged.

By 2011, WWII Soldier introduced its first line of useable products, including the most common items found in an American GI's footlocker such as real bars of Lifebuoy soap, playing cards in original packaging, and useable shaving items. By 2013, the company decided to expand into German and British reproductions as well.

Today, the company carries over two-hundred different reproduction items, representing most of the nations that fought in WWII. WWII Soldier has shipped products to museums and theater productions around the globe, including the Metropolitan Opera, the National WWII Museum, the Smithsonian, and *Hacksaw Ridge, Dunkirk, Live by Night, and Agent Carter.*

2: Strategic Plan & Focus

Mission Statement

The mission statement should be a few sentences that clearly and concisely explain the purpose and values of your business and the reason(s) why your business exists. The statement can reflect your company's moral or social priorities, aspirations, target market, benefits of your products/services, and/or desired outcomes.

WWII Soldier's mission is to tell the story of the greatest generation through the products and equipment they used and the clothes they wore.

Overall Goals & Objectives

Your overall goals and objectives should support your mission statement and describe what you want your business to accomplish.

The company is looking to build awareness and grow its internet sales both in order quantity and in sales dollars, which should also continue to increase theatrical sales without compromising event sales at airshows and reenactments. To specifically grow museum and theatrical business, the company wants to develop more awareness for custom project work. The company is also considering branching into other historical areas, although there is an argument that such a move actually weakens the brand.

There are three SMART (Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Related, Timely) goals for WWII Soldier over the next year. The company wants to increase event sales by 20% year over year. At the same time, a second goal is to increase internet sales by 50% year over year. To do this, the company will need to increase its average order dollar amount by 20%.

On the manufacturing side, the company's major focus is to develop new products and take advantage of newly purchased manufacturing equipment and technologies, which will assist in lowering costs and allowing the company to make more products, which ultimately will assist in meeting the goals above.

Marketing & Product Objectives

Your marketing and product objectives are more specific than your overall goals and objectives. Use this section to explain what you want your marketing campaigns to accomplish. Also indicate your goals for your product's level of service, customer satisfaction, and ability to respond to customer demands and requests.

Marketing objectives for WWII Soldier focus around increasing the sales and awareness of two main product groups, T-shirts, and rations. These are the company's strongest products with the most margin in them.

Website goals include increasing quality website traffic by 50%, increasing email signups by 25%, and increasing the website conversion rate by 20% in one year. These are conservative figures based a 5-10% increase per month with the realization that the reenactor market is highly seasonal and that the company has not yet employed any serious marketing efforts.

AIDAS (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action, Satisfaction) Engagement Goals

The customer should recognize WWII Soldier from historical events, advertisements, and through social media involvement. WWII Soldier should also be a top-five relevant SEO or PPC result for common keywords such as WW2 Props and WWII reproductions.

The customer should be able to see the product as an asset to a reenactor's impression, historical display or theatrical production. It should be easy to understand how the product functions and the product's options for use.

The customer should have feelings of inspiration, nostalgia, or historical significance. Peer-pressure within reenactments and historical groups should play a factor.

Checkout should be easy, safe, and internationally friendly. The customer should be pleased with the quality of the item and should feel confident that the historic nature and authenticity will not be questioned.

Revenue Models

Indicate what revenue model or models your business uses, such as advertising, subscription fees, affiliates, e-commerce, manufacturer, or brokerage. Describe the model(s) used and your pricing strategies.

WWII Soldier is primarily a business to consumer e-commerce business, although there are a few wholesale accounts. The company's pricing structure doesn't have enough margin to offer a true fifty percent wholesale rate, however.

Pricing is calculated based on based on a formula of 2x (costs+ labor at $10 an hour), which was largely based on the company officers providing a majority of the labor. However, the company is examining pricing and attempting to raise labor rates to $20 an hour to better accommodate the costs of employees and paid interns.

The company does not traditionally run global sales, but does offer free shipping on orders over $70 in an attempt to raise the online average order. T-shirts, one of the highest margin items, are occasionally put on sale, usually for major holidays such as Black Friday.

Target Market

Describe the target market / customers for your business.

The company's market consists of military veterans, reenactors, museums, and theatrical productions, and ultimately history and vintage enthusiasts of all types. However, for the purpose of marketing materials, the target market for WWII Soldier is reenactors.

WWII Soldier's relationship with reenactors should continue be its primary focus. Reenactors make up a large percentage of WWII Soldier customers. The company estimates that approximately 70% of website orders are placed by reenactors. Reenactors are also more likely to become repeat customers, they use their product and expose it to weather and harsh conditions.

Since reenactors often cross into other vintage lifestyle groups and tend to be active social media sharers, trends that can be seen in Facebook group recommendations, they make perfect fans and brand ambassadors.

The company has also noticed that history enthusiasts will emulate reenactors and movie productions. It's not uncommon to see event spectators buy gear to dress up like reenactors or request objects featured in their favorite war movies.

There is also some overlap between reenactors and the film productions that they frequently support as extras who are already equipped with uniforms, gear, and equipment. A 2016 IndieWire article documents the filming of a micro-budget Civil War movie filmed entirely with reenactors. In the same way, several of the company's museum contacts developed because of reenactors who happen to be docents, volunteers, or staff.

Although it may seem as though the brand is already strong amongst reenactors, Google Analytics reports for WWII Soldier show that the large majority of sales come from the east coast. Connecting with West Coast and Midwestern reenactors and establishing the brand as a household name will go a long way to solidifying the company's base.

Brand Strategy

Explain the brand components, brand messaging and market research that are necessary to achieve your goals and objectives.

Brand Components

For brand components, you should cover the following:
- *Brand name and why it was chosen*
- *Logo and why it is an effective logo - does it reflect or adhere to the laws of shape and color per The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding by Ries & Ries?*
- *Define what word your brand attempts to own in the minds of consumers and why*
- *Discuss your tagline and why this is an effective tagline or what could/will be done to improve it*
- *Discuss the usage of the branding elements such as color, shape, logo, etc. - throughout the marketing efforts*

Brand Name
The brand name for this company is WWII Soldier. The original naming concept was that the company carries everything that a WWII soldier would have used. However, the name was chosen primarily for its built-in search engine optimization properties. Since high Google rankings were a priority when the company was created, it made sense to use a popular keyword phrase. Today, "Exact Match Domains," domains that match a Google keyword, are not as beneficial as they once were. Changes in Google's search algorithm have lessened the value of exact match domains. Search Engine Journal surmises that an advantage may exist, but it doesn't justify the high cost of a premium, exact match domain.
It's worth noting that WWII Soldier's domain was not a premium domain when it was purchased. However, when the company considered expanding into the First World War, it was discovered that clearly the website has influenced similar domains still on the market. The domain www.wwisoldier.com is listed for sale on Godaddy.com for $1,049.

According to The Brand Gap, WWII Soldier's name fits the following criteria: brevity, appropriateness, easy spelling and pronounceability, and protectability. However, thanks to a number of copycat brands in the field, WWII Soldier's name is not particularly distinctive.

The brand name's biggest flaw is extendibility. The company is already struggling with branding challenges relating to expanding into other time periods. However, Sticky Branding points out that while logos, website, and marketing campaigns come and go, brand names gain meaning over time (Miller). Based on this opinion, the company's recent success in the film industry would be the number one reason not to change the brand name.

Logo

The company originally used three cartoon soldiers as its logo, but the previous logo did not pass the good logo design requirements because it wasn't scalable or grayscale friendly (JustCreative). It's important for small companies "to become recognizable with consistent logos, colors, fonts and even design concepts" (Niagara). Therefore, it's important to have a solid logo that's flexible enough for all scenarios.

The new logo uses the font "American Captain," which has a similarity to art deco fonts of the time period, while also staying true to the simplicity of military markings.

The new logo pays homage to the many heavily illustrated logos of the time period, while keeping a more modern, upscale look that would be retro but still appeal to Hollywood. The stylized soldier makes the "O" and is a reminder of the personal aspect of the brand because it's one individual face. The face uses a pen and ink brush effect that was commonly seen in hand-drawn logos of the period. The soldier's chiseled jaw gives an element of strength.
The color black "implies power and sophistication, but on the other hand, it is associated with villainy and death." It's also a subtle throwback to the black and white images of the time.

The logo's horizontal nature applies the law of shape. The major competitors do not have logos per say, so it's difficult to obey the law of color. However, At The Front's name color on the their website is yellow, and would, in fact, be the opposite of black.

Brand Tagline

"Experience History!"

In a brand story commercial, the company also tested the tagline "Do more than remember… reenact." The reenacting centric tagline received negative comments in testing. Non-reenactors commented felt that reenacting was not a proper way to remember history. "Experience History" takes the emphasis off reenacting, and allows interpretation.

Brand Elements
All marketing materials will use the color scheme of a light olive drab, black, and white and will feature the new logo. Headlines should use the American Captain font in print and graphics. Body font should Twentieth Century, a popular 1940s typeset, and Futura, a modern web-optimized derivative for website work.

Accent colors of red and blue can be incorporated, but should not overpower the olive color scheme. All graphics should be art deco or mid-century in style and focus on shapes such as stars and airplane silhouettes that were popular during the 1940s. Print and digital materials will incorporate vintage black and white stock photographs as well as modern, retro-themed photos and illustrations. Flag elements should used as the background for all product images. Lifestyle photos should feature historically accurate elements to the time period and avoid anachronisms.

Brand Messaging

For brand messaging, you should:
- *Identify the archetype for your brand and describe how the brand reflects the characteristics of this archetype – why is it a fit with your brand?*
- *Provide the unique, benefit-based mission statement for your brand.*
- *Create and provide the brand story as it would be used on your website.*
- *Discuss the promotion plan, explaining in detail how you plan to get the message out and to generate brand awareness and publicity.*

Archetype
While there are elements of the hero and the creator, the brand's main archetype is the sage. Specifically, WWII Soldier falls into the expert or guru category (Sparkol). A lot of the company's success as a business hinges on being an authority and making accurate reproductions. If the company's information is considered suspect, it will negatively affect the company's reputation.

Putnam defines the sage personality as the teacher, expert, and thinker. This is almost an exact match with the company's motivation. A large part of WWII Soldier's product development process involves discovery, research, and then educating the customer on items that they may not even be aware existed.   However, WWII Soldier does also have elements of the creator

archetype, especially when talking about imagination. While the company can't reimagine history, imagination plays a major part in crafting historical displays.

In the case of the hero archetype, the customers, especially reenactors and historians, see themselves as the hero because they are playing the role of the soldier on our logo. In addition, Putnam attributes the hero with mastery through courageous acts. While the company does wish to achieve its mastery, WWII Soldier is more responsible for assisting customers in their own hero's journey than taking a journey itself.

Mission Statement
The following proposed mission statement would be a good fit for the company. "WWII Soldier's mission is to tell the story of the Greatest Generation through the products they used."

This mission is short, to the point, and gives a goal, but is not awkward or long. In fact, a 2007 New York Times article warns that mission statements "have become so filled with jargon and bromides that many employees now dismiss them as window dressing." Because WWII Soldier staff is just a few employees, a simple mission statement is all that's needed.

Brand Story – "Some days are more important than others"

The brand story of the company is really the tale of how the Greatest Generation is disappearing, and with them, the history, the stories and ultimately the objects behind the Second World War. The story takes on the classic WWII slogan "Remember Pearl Harbor" and goes a step further, identifying days of classic battles. To make this statement stronger, the ad tested included parents and grandparents who recently have passed away, not those who were killed in action.

The brand story test effectively targeted two emotional chords amongst the target customer. First, the story creates the sadness that, yes, these men are dying and that history must be preserved, but also there's an element of anger that some people don't know or don't care. For most WWII Soldier customers, World War II is very personal because it connects them to a loved one. Their participation honors that person. This brand story strengthens that connection for the consumer.

The initial brand story commercial ran for two weeks on Facebook, was viewed 5,400 times and performed much higher than any other company post. The brand story commercial can be viewed at this link: *https://www.facebook.com/pg/wwiisoldier/videos/?ref=page_internal*

Promotion Plan

Incorporating brand awareness between online and offline events means marrying the event experience, which tends to be naturally retro and earthy, with the online look, which by nature tends to be more sleek and modern.

The company has already started rolling out the proposed branding logo and other graphic elements as part of its website redesign. Social media accounts and some website elements still need to be converted to the new logo and brand scheme.

Creating an email template that uses the new branding will make sending out both email marketing emails and order information easier.

The company has also rolled out a test brand story commercial that highlighted customer's families who served in WWII. Due to the success of this brand story video, seasonal videos should be released to coincide with major battles and national holidays.

Offline, new branding needs to be rolled out in time for fall events. New banners, business cards, and post cards that utilize the correct logo, color and font scheme need to be ordered to create a consistent image on and offline. Also, the company vehicles should have branding elements added via outdoor vinyl. The company should also consider ordering custom, branded shopping bags, pens, and other giveaway type items.

Differentiation Points & Positioning

Describe how your brand is different from that of the competition. What value propositions make the brand unique and different in the minds of your customers – in other words, how do customers differentiate what you offer from what your competition offers? Why would a customer choose your brand/company over a competitor's? How will you position your product/brand against the competitors' products/brands? What steps will you take to dominate the category, or what steps has your company taken to dominate the category?

WWII Soldier creates museum-quality reproductions of hard-to-find personal items that are both historically accurate and functional. They have the largest assortment of personal items and is the only company that currently manufactures reproduction WWII era T-shirts. One of the company's differentiators is that they tend to carry useable products, unlike other companies that sell predominately empty boxes.

WWII Soldier is almost as well known for our traveling reproduction Army Post Exchange (PX) as it is for its reproduction products. The company literally sets up a WWII tent and operates a fully-functioning PX store at historical events around the country. In addition to allowing customers to save shipping on orders, they are also emerged in an authentic shopping experience. It's one thing to see a single product in a photo; it's something entirely different to see wooden slat shelving full of 1940s merchandise and be able to smell and feel it.

Customers choose our brand over our competitors because we have unique items that, in many cases, are unavailable for purchase anywhere else. The company is able use the side-by-side test with many of its products, where an original is photographed next to a reproduction. Many competitors often don't own the original or don't have the quality of product to do comparison photos.

Most importantly, though, customers choose WWII Soldier because the company carries functional products that aren't Styrofoam or blocks of wood. In addition, the company doesn't just offer just one of something. Some companies carry one type of cigarette package from the 1940s. WWII Soldier carries a replica carton from every major cigarette manufacturer and have, in some cases, stocks multiple variations, one for each year of the war.

Customers rave about the experience of shopping at WWII Soldier's PX. However, bringing that experience to the web has been a struggle. A big part of creating the PX experience online is simply educating and publishing original photos and documentation. Original ads help to establish authenticity and relevance while keeping in line with the brand's archetype. Better image choices and professional photography will also help dominate the niche online.

3: Situational Analysis

SWOT Analysis

Outline and explain the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for your product. Include both a SWOT four-quadrant chart with the SWOT items bullet pointed as well as a detailed explanation of each item in the text.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Many of our products are unique items. Only other option is to purchase an original. • Some of our reproductions are extremely high quality and indistinguishable from the originals. • We carry the largest assortment of reproduction personal items.	• Lack of startup capital hinders the ability to develop higher ticket items. • Due to inconsistent sales levels, we mainly rely on short-term help. • Our location, while key to reenactments, makes it hard to compete with L.A. based prop companies. • No copyright protection means many copycats.
Opportunities	Threats
• Reenactors are expanding into neighboring historical eras, which creates more revenue with the same customer base. • Exploiting regional differences	• A small market size dictates higher costs of goods, slower inventory turn and hampers product development. • Digital printing inspires individuals to create inferior DIY products. • Gun laws threaten tactical reenactments. • Political backlash

Strengths

WWII Soldier has several major strengths in the marketplace. The biggest is that the company is literally the only option for many reproduction items. For a museum or reenactors, their only other option is to purchase an original. Many of our products are unique items. Only other option is to purchase an original, which can run between four and ten times the cost and require both time and patience to find. Originals tend to also be fragile and not suitable for casual use.

The company's second strength is that many of our reproductions are extremely high quality and indistinguishable from the originals.

WWII Soldier carries the largest assortment of reproduction personal items amongst its competitors, making the company an easy one stop shop for reenactors, as well as a single source for movies and museums who are looking to easily create a large display.

Weaknesses

WWII Soldier was started with a little cash and a lot of sweat equity. While the results are impressive, considering the small amount of funding, the company doesn't have a lot of extra profits or access to credit to expand the business. This also limits the company's ability to branch into uniforms and other high-ticket projects that require cash outlay.

The company's sales are largely dependent on event sales, which by nature can be greatly affected by weather, attendance, and other extraordinary factors, such as vehicle problems. For this reason, most of the employees are contract or part time help. Therefore, the company must grow its web presence to the point that it can sustain enough of a constant cash flow to carry a larger fulltime staff.

WWII Soldier is located in York, PA. While it is a strategic advantage to most of the east coast reenactments and is within driving distance of NYC, its distance from the film industry in L.A. doesn't allow the company to work closely with motion picture productions, which for many companies is a large percent of their business. The company can't make on-set deliveries or installations or turn around custom work in hours.

Reproductions, by nature, cannot be copyrighted by the company. This means that the company either needs to develop copyrightable merchandise to sell alongside its reproductions, or must continually out perform its competitors on a regular basis.

Opportunities

As reenacting continues to gain popularity, many reenactors branch into other time periods. WWI reenacting continues to grow, with new events being added each year. This would give us an entirely new revenue stream with the same revenue base. The 1950s rockabilly and swing dance scene continues to be popular in urban areas, and appeals to the classic car crowd. Vietnam reenacting may also be the next big trend. Expanding into these areas would create new revenue streams as well as giving the company more opportunities for film, television, and museum work.

Reenacting and history enthusiasts vary greatly from region to region. Keying in on these differences and designing new product accordingly helps establish new markets. As regulations make gun ownership more difficult, reenactors have been shifting to static, historical displays that show other parts of war in addition to staged battles.

Threats

Cheap printers, digital die-cutters and 3D printers are perhaps the biggest threat to the company. Many DIY enthusiasts are happy with made at home products, despite their lack of authenticity.

Gun laws threaten the private ownership of historical weapons. This would dramatically lessen the number of reenactments, which make up a large portion of the company's revenue. For that reason, the company must shift to a more balanced business model that focuses as much on historical enthusiasts and movies and theatrical productions.

The rise of alt-right, neo-Nazi groups, and the current political landscape is a threat to the company's efforts at legitimately portraying history. Despite disclaimers and historical explanations, merchandise is frequently purchased to support modern political agendas. Reenactments struggle with their reputation in the press in general, but the current political divide is amplifying this in both directions. For example, the company provided a significant number of reproduction prisoner of war (POW) care packages for a historical demonstration at Fort Mifflin. The event generated a huge amount of negative press due to the confusion between POW and concentration camps (Murrell). The company's name was not mentioned, but any negative press could have a huge negative affect on sales.

Industry Analysis

This section should include your analysis of the industry of which your product/company is a part. Potential items may include, but are not limited to, the current state of your industry (growing, declining, etc.), number of competitors within the industry, revenue that the industry typically generates, etc.

The reenactor community drives most of WWII Soldier's current revenue. This is a very small niche, although the customers are fanatical. The current cash layout for an individual to buy a basic infantry uniform costs between $1,200 – $1,500. (Star Beacon).

Reenactor growth in the United States is hard to track, although many events continue to grow year over year. A staged D-day landing on Lake Erie attracts 30,000 spectators and over 2,000 registered reenactors in a single day (Cleveland, 2016). This size has doubled from the 2012 estimated stats of 15,000 spectators and 750 registered reenactors. (Golgowski, 2012).

Based on regional event totals and Facebook groups, I would estimate that there are no more than 10,000 active WWII reenactors in the US and Canada. Using the same methodology, European reenactors number in the thousands as well, concentrated in Europe and Australia.

The theatrical industry is a completely different marketplace, although most competitors supply both markets. Historical dramas and biopics continue to be a Hollywood mainstay, if only because of their ability to win Oscars. Between 2000 and 2011, thirty-eight biopics were nominated for either Best Actor or Actress (Pérez-Simón, 2014). In 2015 alone, six historical dramas, five of which were set between 1930 and 1960, were nominated for an Academy Award in a major category (Oscars, 2015).

Independent films and web series have gotten a boost in recent years from Youtube and other streaming services. Live theatrical productions tend to have a small budget, but earnings for non-profit theaters topped 1.1 billion in 2016 (Statista).

Competitor Analysis

In this section, discuss in detail each of your brand's competitors, how each is positioned in the market, success of each within the market and their share of market and any other factors that might affect the marketing of your product/brand.

There are many historical reproduction companies that cover various time-periods. Within a specific time-period, such as WWII, there are companies that focus on various niches such as uniforms and weapons. WWII Soldier's niche is personal items. However, WWII Soldier faces competitors from a variety of places, including T-shirts shops, Café Press, and individual Facebook sellers.

At The Front, WWII Impressions, and What Price Glory are the three big uniform manufacturers that rule the industry. They specialize in German, American, and British uniforms, respectively, although they all make uniforms and equipment for other nations. These companies, especially At The Front, remain the biggest players in the industry, but there is very little product competition. For these companies, WWII Soldier is competing more for dollars than trying to prove a superior product.

Service of Supply, War's End Shop, and WWII Supply Room are the company's most direct competitors. Only War's End Shop out of Ohio consistently attends events. None of these companies utilize SEO on their websites in any intentional manner and none of them are engaged in PPC. WWII Supply Room's website tends to violate FTC regulations by making statements it can't back up about its quality and authenticity, and has a derogatory tone that may sit well with the core demographic.

Since all of these companies are privately owned, the size of the business must largely be gauged by the quality of the website, number of products, and number of likes on Facebook. WWII Soldier remains ahead of Service of Supply and WWII Supply room in each of these areas, but lags behind At The Front.

Company Brief

In this section please explain any challenges being faced by the company, the current state of the company, special circumstances that might be taken into consideration, such as if the company is acquiring funding, merging with another company, etc.

WWII Soldier is at max capacity in both space, labor and manufacturing capacities. The company must make some decisions about the size and scale of the company, such as the

percentage of products manufactured in-house, and the use of cash to purchase machinery or to purchase custom manufactured products.

WWII Soldier's marketing budget is incredibly small, so any marketing campaigns must involve more grass roots tactics than paid marketing. WWII Soldier's team does have staff with expertise in brand management, as well as website programming and analysis. However, a real challenge for any WWII Soldier marketing plan is to make sure that it fits within both a time and dollar budget that's feasible for the company.

Customer Analysis

Discuss your target market including their demographics, psychographics, geographic location(s) and any other characteristics relevant to the marketing of your product/brand.

Based on a three-month Google Analytics report on WWII Soldier's website, 85% of website visitors are male. Percentage of customers by age is split almost evenly between age brackets up to 55.

73% of WWII Soldier website visitors live in the United States, while approximately 15% live in Europe. 3% of visitors are Canadian, while 2% are Australian. Within the U.S., visitors are primarily from the North East and West Coast, with a strong presence in the South and around greater Chicago.

Income varies greatly amongst customers. Museum and theatrical buyers have specified budgets for projects, which can be far larger than any individual's discretionary income. Historical and military museums make up about 27% of the entire museum industry (IBIS), but most museums work on a tight budget and are looking for cost-cutting measures to stretch funding and donations. On the other end of the scale, a theatrical production like Hacksaw Ridge, which placed several large orders with the company, had a budget of $40 million (Gray).

Audience Intentions

The main commonality amongst customers is an interest in military history or the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Beyond military enthusiasts, retro-themed products appeal to rockabilly and other vintage counter-cultures.

Because of the strength of the company's T-shirt line, there's a definite split in the purchasing mindset. While many orders do combine items from both categories, in general, buyers have some need or desire for historical props, or they're buying T-shirts. T-shirt buyers are not loyal to one specific military unit. For example, a customer will buy a shirt for his reenacting unit, another because he served at a certain military base, and a third to wear because his father was stationed with a different unit. Some customers are more concerned that they can purchase their unit's shirt than the authenticity of T-shirt designs.

Prop buyers are a different customer all together and are very specific in their needs. They tend to be detail driven and are most concerned with top notch accuracy at a price point that fits their budget along with the relevance of the product to the scene or display.

Legal Analysis

Discuss any legal issues that might face the company and/or product (jurisdiction, intellectual property, web-based contracts, first amendment, etc.) and how these might be managed or mitigated.

WWII Soldier must deal with several legal issues that are unique to its company model. Primarily the company must be concerned with regulatory and copyright issues, although the company is aware that it must monitor domestic and international law on the ownership of controversial items as well.

WWII Soldier stocks inert and dummy weapons as well as replica knives and blades that are sometimes considered weapons, as well as Third Reich and Nazi ephemera. There are strict regulations on selling such items in certain European countries such as Germany, Italy, and France.

In general, WWII Soldier needs to be aware of regulatory issues surrounding packaging, content, and manufacturing that were not true in the 1940s. Accurate reproductions must be marketed strictly for display only.

Copyright is the largest regulatory issue that affects WWII Soldier. Except for the U.S. Marines, copyrights held by various branches of the United States military are considered owned by the citizens of the United States, and therefore can be reproduced without licensing. However, this also means that anyone else can make many of the same products.

In addition, competitors have attempted to register new copyrights on old designs. While these copyrights are arguably not valid, it takes a significant budget to argue and appeal such decisions.

WWII Soldier does its best to ensure that our products do not violate copyright law. While the company conducts research on reproductions and has a good relationship with suppliers, there is always a chance that the company could be required to remove a product or pay a licensing fee.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) limits the company's ability to create edible rations. Because 1940s era packaging is not complaint with modern FDA laws, the company can only sell empty boxes, kits, and instructions. The company has contemplated selling display-only reproductions for museums on a custom basis.

While not directly affecting the current business, gun laws may significantly alter the reenactor landscape, which would dramatically impact business. Some proposed assault weapons bans include many WWII-era rifles and handguns, including California's Senate Bill 880, which would define an assault weapon to mean "a semiautomatic centerfire weapon or a semiautomatic pistol that does not have a fixed magazine but has any one of those special attributes."

Privacy Policies

Describe the privacy policies you will use for your business regarding data submitted by website users, email addresses obtained from users, credit card numbers of customers, etc. Include a written privacy policy that you would place on your website.

Introduction

This policy sets out the types of personal information we may collect from you when you use the WWII Soldier.com website as well as how we process that personal information. This policy is effective from *18 June 2017.*

By using any part of the WWII Soldier.com website or providing personal information to us, you consent to us processing your personal information as set out in this policy.

Gathering of Non-Identifying Information

WWII Soldier collects non-personally-identifying information of the sort that web browsers and servers typically make available, such as the browser type, language preference, referring site, and the date and time of each visitor request. WWII Soldier's purpose in collecting non-personally identifying information is to better understand how WWII Soldier's visitors use its website. From time to time, WWII Soldier may release

non-personally-identifying information in the aggregate, e.g., by publishing a report on trends in the usage of its website.

WWII Soldier also collects potentially personally-identifying information like Internet Protocol (IP) addresses for logged in users and for users leaving comments on WordPress.com blogs. WWII Soldier only discloses logged in user and commenter IP addresses under the same circumstances that it uses and discloses personally-identifying information as described below, except that blog commenter IP addresses and email addresses are visible and may be disclosed to the administrators of the site.

Gathering of Personally-Identifying Information

Certain visitors to WWII Soldier's website choose to interact with WWII Soldier in ways that require WWII Soldier to gather personally-identifying information. The amount and type of information that WWII Soldier gathers depends on the nature of the interaction. For example, we ask visitors who sign up for email marketing and blog subscriptions to provide a username and email address. Those who engage in transactions with WWII Soldier – by placing an order, for example – are asked to provide additional information, including as necessary the personal and financial information required to process those transactions. In each case, WWII Soldier collects such information only insofar as is appropriate to fulfill the purpose of the visitor's interaction with WWII Soldier. Visitors can always refuse to supply personally-identifying information, with the caveat that it may prevent them from engaging in certain website-related activities.

Protection of Certain Personally-Identifying Information

Information about our customers is an important part of our business, and we are not in the business of selling it to others. We share customer information only as described below.

Third-Party Service Providers: We employ other companies and individuals to perform functions on our behalf. Examples may include fulfilling orders, delivering packages, sending postal mail and e-mail, removing repetitive information from customer lists, analyzing data, providing marketing assistance, providing search results and links (including paid listings and links), processing credit card payments, and providing customer service. They have access to personal information needed to perform their functions, but may not use it for other purposes.

Business Transfers: As we continue to develop our business, we might sell or buy stores, subsidiaries, or business units. In such transactions, customer information generally is one of the transferred business assets but remains subject to the promises made in any pre-existing Privacy Notice (unless, of course, the customer consents otherwise). Also, in the event that Jamestowne Fine Products, LLC dba WWII Soldier or substantially all of its assets are acquired, customer information will of course be one of the transferred assets.

Protection of WWII Soldier and Others: We release account and other personal information when we believe release is appropriate to comply with the law; enforce or apply our conditions of use and other agreements; or protect the rights, property, or safety of WWII Soldier, our users, or others. This includes exchanging information with other companies and organizations for fraud protection and credit risk reduction. Obviously, however, this does not include selling, renting, sharing, or otherwise disclosing personally identifiable information from customers for commercial purposes in violation of the commitments set forth in this Privacy Notice.

With Your Consent: Other than as set out above, you will receive notice when information about you might go to third parties, and you will have an opportunity to choose not to share the information.

Cookies

Cookies are unique identifiers that we transfer to your device to enable our systems to recognize your device and to provide *features such better search results, suggested items, and* storage of items in your Shopping Cart between visits.

The Help feature on most browsers will tell you how to prevent your browser from accepting new cookies, how to have the browser notify you when you receive a new cookie, or how to disable cookies altogether. Additionally, you can disable or delete similar data used by browser add-ons, such as Flash cookies, by changing the add-on's settings or visiting the Web site of its manufacturer. Because cookies allow you to take advantage of some of *WWII Soldier's* essential features, we recommend that you leave them turned on. For instance, if you block or otherwise reject our cookies, you may not be able to add items to your Shopping Cart, proceed to Checkout, *or use any* services that require you to sign in.

Our Commitment to Children's Privacy

Protecting the privacy of the very young is especially important. For that reason, we never collect or maintain information at our website from those we actually know are under 13, and no part of our website is structured to attract anyone under 13.

Terms of Use

Describe the terms of use for people who visit your website. Include a written terms of use agreement that you would place on your website.

WWII Soldier's current terms and conditions should be part of the purchase process and be updated in a few ways.

Forbes reports that in 2013's Schnabel v. Trilegiant Corp., a district court concluded that the Schnabel's never agreed to the online terms and conditions, and did not need to be held to the terms within. Although Trilegiant appealed, a Second Circuit of Appeals held the original agreement and provided guidance. The Appeals Court found that Trilegiant's footer link was insufficient to constitute ascent, and that auto-deduction of payments was far too passive to be a confirmation. The Schnabel case clearly states that "that website Terms of Use that are available solely via a link in a small font at the bottom of a homepage, without any notice to users or reasonable manifestation of assent, are unlikely to be enforceable." Another 2017 ruling found the same was true of Lush Cosmetic's website's terms and conditions. For this reason, the entire agreement is not valid and legally can be thrown out of court in regards to any clause.

For the terms and conditions to be enforceable, WWII Soldier's website should be redesigned to agree to terms and conditions during the search process, with a clickable button at the point of purchase, and / or delivered via email as part of the purchase process. Per several legal cases, clicking "I agree" seems to be considered the standard for a signed online agreement.

It's also important to note that even with the above modifications, this agreement is considered an adhesion contract, in which the purchaser can only take or leave the agreement. Cornell Law points out that courts will routinely scrutinize such contracts and that the weaker party will not "be held to adhere to contract terms that are beyond what the weaker party would have reasonably expected from the contract, even if what he or she reasonably expected was outside the strict letter of agreement."

Terms and Conditions

Unused items may be returned within 30 days. We cannot accept returns of open cosmetics, food, or other consumable items. Items must be unused and in "like new" condition.

You must be 18 years old to purchase any reproduction cigarettes or smoking items.

We abide by international laws regarding the shipment of Nazi German artifacts and historical reproductions. We reserve the right to refuse to ship these items where prohibited by law.

We reserve copyright for our graphics, artwork, photos and products. Any duplication or sale of these items without our permission is strictly prohibited.

Free paperwork is for educational and personal use only. Any commercial use or sales of free paperwork is strictly prohibited.

Disclaimers

All of our items are being sold for display or historical use only. Vintage packaging does not contain modern care, use, and warning labels. Do not ingest or otherwise consume reproduction or vintage items.

The WWII Soldier does not condone or seek to sponsor extremist regimes such as the Third Reich, USSR, Fascist Italy, or Imperial Japan. We are not affiliated in any way with any political ideology including but not limited to the Nazi and Neo Nazi parties. We create historical reproduction and collector's pieces for historical use, props, and display only.

The WWII Soldier does not promote smoking. Our reproduction cigarette items are for display only and do not contain real cigarettes.

To the best of our knowledge, all of our items on our website were taken from artwork and images in the public domain, or we are authorized sellers of wholesale purchased product repackaged in display only packaging. Any other use of copyright logos or artwork is purely accidental. If you have any questions, please contact us at orders@thewwiisoldier.com

No warranties.

This Website is provided "as is," with all faults, and WWII Soldier makes no express or implied representations or warranties, of any kind related to this Website or the materials contained on this Website. Additionally, nothing contained on this Website shall be construed as providing consult or advice to you.

Limitation of liability.

In no event shall WWII Soldier nor any of its officers, directors and employees, be liable to you for anything arising out of or in any way connected with your use of this Website, whether such liability is under contract, tort or otherwise, and WWII Soldier, including its officers, directors and employees shall not be liable for any indirect, consequential or special liability arising out of or in any way related to your use of this Website.

Indemnification.

You hereby indemnify to the fullest extent WWII Soldier from and against any and all liabilities, costs, demands, causes of action, damages and expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) arising out of or in any way related to your breach of any of the provisions of these Terms.

4: Internet Marketing Strategy & Tactics

Buyer Personas & Customer Roles

Identify the buyer personas for your business and describe your customers, including their demographics, geographic location, buying habits, and the roles they play within their organization (e.g., CEO, product buyer, product user, etc.).

Military and history enthusiasts are customers who might not even be familiar with WWII reenacting. These shoppers tend to be veterans and current or future military. They can also be relatives and gift-buyers. Reproduction T-shirts appeal to these buyers as ways to show their esprit-de-corps and retro tastes. These consumers tend to be value driven and are looking for specific military bases and units that celebrate their own service or the service of a family member.

Museums, living history enthusiasts and reenactors are a very difficult to please audience that expects top notch accuracy. Our unique differentiator is primarily designed to target this market, because living historians and reenactors want to use their products and not just lay them out on a blanket and display them, while Museums will use the products to create interactive displays. In these cases, rubber and wood block dummies are far less effective. These customers also tend to place a higher value on reproductions where the original is scarce. They will always buy an equally-priced antique if given the choice between an authentic item and a reproduction. While museum buyers may not be the end user, living history enthusiasts are always the buyer and the user, but some require input or permission from a group leader.

Theatrical productions include both stage and film, as well as murder mystery trains, haunted houses, amusement parks, and other experiences that use props and set dressing. For these companies, there's a priority on creating a certain look, so they have a distinct need for being able to find items that fit a very specific aspect of the 1940s. Theater productions weigh purchase decisions based on scene fit or how well a product fits into the vision of the scene, as well as how the prop shows up on stage or on camera.

Buyer Personas

Competitive - These high-spending customers require the most accurate product, tend to be impatient and want new, better reproductions all the time.

Spontaneous - Spontaneous customers won't want to do research or think on their own. Pre-selected assortments appeal to them.

Humanistic - This customer desires the backstory of products and how they were used or relate to real people. Original photos and stories help make a larger emotional connection.

Methodical - The research hound will need to make sure that all details and measurements are perfect. Side-by-side comparison photos are necessary to close the sale.

New Media / Viral / Social Media

Explain how you will use new media platforms and distribution as part of your marketing campaign. As applicable, include examples of social media interaction with customers, content creation for blogs and video, and so on.

The company's social media is lacking in posts and regular responsiveness. WWII Soldier needs to focus on its blogging efforts, and the company must dedicate man hours to properly establishing and supporting its social media presence. The company will use Hoot Suite to assist in making regular social media posts on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest. Social media and blog posts should focus on historical context for products, period manufacturing techniques, tips for building better displays, book reviews, side-by-side product photos, event coverage, and other related posts. Polls and surveys can also be used to gain insight into product development, event ideas, and other company projects.

Company resources should focus on making strong inroads into social media prior to attempting to create a large-scale brand ambassador program. The Pathfinder ambassador program, designed to tie-in with the marketing campaign, should be rolled out in steps, starting with the campaign itself. If the campaign tests well, the complete program, which allows brand ambassadors to earn free merchandise and insider information in exchange for research, testing, and reviews, should be introduced in 2018.

The consistent, planned use of social media should increase the company's website traffic by as much as 20%.

Mobile

In this section, discuss in the mobile marketing channels you plan to employ. Discuss how you will use text messaging / SMS, MMS, location-based services, game-based marketing, augmented reality, mobile applications and any other mobile technology that will play a role in your marketing plan.

Due to this historical nature of WWII Soldier, mobile marketing wasn't even an issue until recently. Events weren't typically phone-friendly, and reenactors were discouraged from using their phones. Improving cellular coverage, combined with smartphone functionality have led to a huge rise in smartphone usage at events. For that reason, mobile marketing needs to be a key marketing focus, even in a niche that's traditionally old-school.

Mobile optimization is critical, considering that 87% of millennials keep their smartphones in reach 24/7. However, extensive mobile marketing is currently out of the range of WWII Soldier's financial and in-house labor budget.

QR codes on business cards are an easy first step that wouldn't require a significant budget outlay but may result in an uptick of traffic. The company is already looking for a cost-effective SMS signup service for events. Launching website integrated text-messaging and SMS services, such as messaging tracking information will assist customer service efforts since order tracking continues to be a huge customer service issue, despite continuing efforts to make order lookup more customer-friendly.

However, within the next year, WWII Soldier should consider a branded, interactive WWII app that connects with brand story.

Website

Describe how you will design, manage and test your website to optimize for conversions and retention. Include the functionality you plan to deploy, such as shopping cart, blog, lead generation or content management system (CMS).

The website was redesigned in December and will continue to use the existing framework, although the website is in dire need of an update to a faster, more robust hosting. The website is a WordPress CMS site that runs Woo Commerce as its ecommerce system. Priority should be put on the following programming tasks. Caching should be installed, which was deactivated during the redesign. CSS and JavaScript minify changes should be implemented. Image optimization software should also be installed or images should be optimized manually. The speed situation should be monitored regularly, and if the speed doesn't improve, the hosting provider should be able to make recommendations to remedy the situation.

The company will continue to use Google Analytics and Google Optimize to monitor and test the website's performance, as well as employ usability testing. Initial usability tests revealed that there are several things that still need to be addressed within the website.

Due to the growing number of international orders, the company should consider installing translator software, as well as adding international-friendly checkout options.

Conversion Goals
Describe the desired action you want visitors to take when they arrive at your site (sales, leads, participation, etc.).

The primary conversion goal for WWIISoldier.com is a completed purchase of $70 or more. Secondary goals are email signups and social media interactions.

Landing Pages

Describe landing pages that will be developed for the site, campaigns they will be associated with and the messaging strategy for these pages. Explain testing and measurement framework to be implemented within these pages.

Several product group landing pages need to be developed to work with SEO keywords, as well as to improve website usability, especially in the area of rations. Right now, landing pages are automatically generated by category.

Specific battle landing pages that support reenacted events, namely D-Day, Battle of the Bulge and the Battle of Britain need to be constructed. There should also be a landing page that connects various blog posts that relate to the various marketing campaigns, as well as a pathfinder portal for the brand ambassador campaign and contest. Campaign landing pages will use code to integrate with social media and use the appropriate forms.

The landing pages should focus on keyword-friendly writing educational descriptions that explains the following: Who used it? Why was it used? How was it used? When was it used? What does it go with? The landing pages should also reference popular reenactor / historian approved sources when possible and use side-by-side photography with originals.

Analytics will be used to monitor the amount of traffic to the pages, conversion rate, inbound links, and bounce rate to assess and tweak landing page designs. Marketing campaign landing pages will be tagged so that specific data, such as sales by campaign, can be measured to assess the campaigns.

Home Page

Describe home page design and messaging elements. Explain testing and measurement framework to be implemented on home page.

There are still several homepage elements that can be improved from a usability perspective. The homepage needs to improve its search bar, add a static email signup above the fold, increase the number of carousel slides and tie them to landing pages, as well as creating a second set of static boxes that feature product lines, call out promotions, and link to landing pages.

Several pages need to be added to the website and their links added to home page and the footer, including speaking engagements, film work, custom props, and events.

The home page design will incorporate elements that are appealing to various consumer segments. An area will cater specifically to veterans and historical enthusiasts that is more theme-friendly and highlights gift items. Another area will call out the company's recent film work, and a third will show the level of authenticity.

This will be a multi-variant test on the top banner, which is the main above-the-fold element of the home page. The test will run for two weeks to see which banner attracts the most conversions. Due to the company's relatively low budget, the test will be run through Google Optimize.

Testing will include several different variations of the top banner. For the test, the carousel will need to be deactivated. In addition to testing various copy, the testing will also see if a larger red button is more effective than the muted olive drab green, which matches the site but is not as eye catching.

Usability testing will be employed after the majority of changes are introduced.

Funnel Navigation
Describe the path visitors will take that leads to a conversion – detailing each step and outlining a testing and measurement strategy for each.
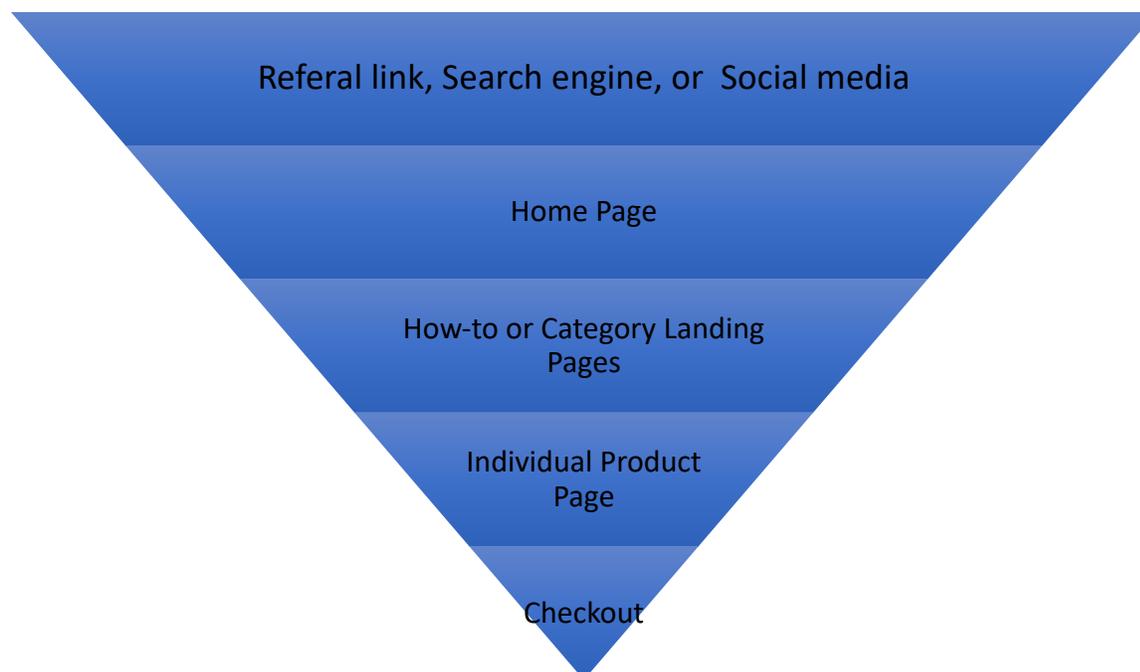
Step 1. Customers will enter the site from an ad or referral link that helps drive new traffic and gain customer awareness. Spyfu, Google Analytics, as well as social media analytics will be used to assess the validity of traffic.

Step 2. Even though a relatively small percentage of traffic enters the home page, it is still an important page to establish branding and interest. Depending on the keywords used above, many customers may not arrive on this page and will skip to step 3.

Step 3. 8% of WWII Soldier's website traffic currently enters through a category or landing page. By looking at bounce rate, incoming traffic, and keywords, landing pages and category pages can

Step 4. The product page is currently the only place where a customer can add a product to the shopping cart. While bounce rate and conversion rate are only useful for specific products, incoming traffic and keywords can be monitored to assess the effectiveness of the various products.

Step 5. The end goal is for the shopper to complete checkout and place the order. By monitoring the conversion rate on this page, any technical issues can be addressed.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Describe how you will optimize your website for search engines and how you will maintain your site content and search rank. Include a list of the keywords/phrases you will optimize your website for.

Many SEO elements have been improved on the website, however, continual optimization is necessary. The company is already running the Yoast SEO plugin on the website. All current product SEO compliance should be verified. Landing pages need to be created for major SEO terms as well as for marketing campaign efforts.

The website's architecture needs to be improved to focus on multiple ways to search the site. There are many product categories that get broken up into several sub-categories before the

customer can get to the product itself. The company has already identified that there's a need for landing pages for top keyword searches directly from the home page to avoid having to go through three or four clicks to get a valid information. For example, currently, to get to K-rations, the customer must go to the category US, then choose rations, and then navigate through 54 products to find each individual component. That process may involve up to 6 clicks. A page specifically about K-rations would allow the customer to order directly from a search result or social media post to that page.

On a product level, more needs to be done with kits and product tags. While the company has started to put a value on product tags, this is another area that can be used to better sort and divide products to help with a flatter page structure and less clicks to the cart. On the same token, product packages or kits that allow a customer to add several products to the cart with one click will both increase sales and require less clicks to complete a transaction.

The website navigation also needs to be tweaked. Drop-downs need to be added to the main menu so that there aren't so many clicks. In addition, quick add-to-cart function on landing pages for products that don't have sizes or require additional information would help. While these may not be possible in the short term, it would make shopping easier and help keep a flatter architecture.

If the above website flaws are corrected, a natural external linking campaign and good blogging and sharing habits should greatly increase the website's current SEO rankings and generate a substantial number of inbound links without launching a labor intensive or costly link-building campaign that risks upsetting Google's algorithm, which values natural link building over link farms and other black hat or gray hat strategies that may get the site banned.

 Beyond website optimization, the company needs to focus on data mining its own internal search engine to develop the most requested product as well as monitoring SpyFu and Google analytics to continue to evaluate performance.

Target Keywords for Optimization

All keywords listed will be used with different spelling variations of World War Two (example: WWII T-shirts, WW2 T-shirts, World War 2 T-shirts, World War Two T-shirts, WW11 T-shirts)

WWII T-shirts, WWII reproductions, WWII Props, WWII rations, WWII US Rations, WWII British Rations, WWII German Rations, WWII Sports shirts, WWII gear, WWII uniforms, WWII reenactors

US Army T-shirts, Retro T-shirts, Vintage Army T-shirts, US Army Rations, 1940s props, 1940s reproductions, US Army reproductions, K-rations, C-Rations.

Pay-Per-Click (PPC) / Paid Advertising

Explain your paid search strategy for testing targeted keywords for SEO, as well as integrating these terms in paid placement within the content network. Outline messaging, measurement and tracking strategy for PPC/Paid Placements, as well as exposure, visitors and conversion objectives.

Since WWII Soldier's competitors do not have paid adverting campaigns in Google's search results, there is a strong potential for a large return on investment (ROI). By placing small bids on popular keywords, WWII Soldier can greatly increase website traffic and brand awareness.

WWII Soldier has seen a spike in organic or natural search listings in the last three months, most likely based on improvements in SEO efforts and the installation of Yoast SEO. However, there are a significant number of keywords where the company is still not ranking. Spyfu estimates that there are 91,000 keywords where one or more competitors appear in Google listings, while WWII Soldier does not.

While current organic efforts should continue, pay-per-click advertising through Google AdWords allows for several advantages over just using organic listings. PPC advertising creates instant SEO results, has solid tracking data, and can be managed in just a few hours a week (Alex).

The chart below is an example of profitable keyword terms that might generate both brand awareness and a significant return on investment. The conversion rate, or percentage of customers who will complete a purchase, can be as low as 1.8% and still generate a profit. For example, 5,000 clicks would generate an additional $5,400 in revenue at a cost of $1,500. After a 50% cost of goods, the company would net approximately $1,400. A cost of $400 maintenance per 5,000 clicks leaves the company with $1,000 profit and approximately 90 new customers.

Keyword (by relevance)	Avg. monthly searches ?	Competition ?	Suggested bid ? ↑	Ad impr. share ?	Add to plan
british paratroopers ww2	100 – 1K	Low	$0.03	–	»
reproduction ww2	100 – 1K	Medium	$0.05	–	»
reproduction us ww2	10 – 100	Medium	$0.05	–	»
ww2 paratrooper helmet	100 – 1K	Medium	$0.08	–	»
ww2 airborne uniform	100 – 1K	High	$0.09	–	»
ww2 paratrooper gear	100 – 1K	Medium	$0.11	–	»
ww2 equipment	100 – 1K	Low	$0.12	–	»
ww2 german reproduction	100 – 1K	Medium	$0.14	–	»

For each keyword, an appropriate landing page would further increase conversion rates and performance. In addition, regular monitoring through Google Analytics and AdWords should be used to remove under-performing keywords and test others. Due to the low search volume of many keywords, it's recommended that keyword tests remain active for at least a week and possibly a month between changes. Despite the relatively high cost of SpyFu, it's recommended that the company maintain a SpyFu account for three months until initial PPC testing is complete.

Pay-per-click will help increase sales immediately and generate new customers while the company's organic search efforts continue to pay dividends down the road. A strong ROI of around 180%-300% makes pay-per-click advertising a smart decision in a market where few other companies are currently taking advantage of paid advertising in search space.

Email Marketing & Customer Messaging

Explain your strategy for building email lists and creating messaging to existing customers via Email and/or other channels (RSS, Social Media, etc.).

WWII Soldier has not made a strong effort to collect emails in the past, and currently has less than 300 emails on its Mail Chimp email signup. The company will need to convert its list to Aweber if it wishes to reach out to existing customers who have placed an order in the past and attempt to sign them up. Aweber is the only inexpensive service that allows imported email addresses. Both Aweber and MailChimp are CAN-SPAM complaint.

By utilizing Aweber and carefully following all the CAN-SPAM requirements, a campaign can be launched to reach out to existing customers. There remains some risk that these users may mark the email as spam or unsubscribe in large numbers. However, only 36% percent of email recipients on average will unsubscribe specifically because they didn't subscribe. This could ultimately affect the company's relationship with its email service provider and should be considered carefully.

Going forward, WWII Soldier should implement a short, a bi-weekly email that features one product or project, highlights a blog post, and announces any upcoming events.

In addition, WWII Soldier should be using HootSuite to post to social media no less than three times a week. These internal posts should have some candid elements, shed light into the company and create brand awareness, as well as being targeted towards new product development, blog promotions, sales, events, and PR announcements.

Partner / Affiliate Marketing

Identify potential partners and affiliates. Describe your strategy to attract, retain and optimize these relationships.

WWII Soldier is not currently in a position to operate its own affiliate marketing program, and Commission Junction doesn't seem like a good fit at this point due to the size of WWII Soldier's niche.

However, since a fair amount of historical conversation revolves around books and research, WWII Soldier should consider using Amazon's affiliate marketing program in some of its blog posts and resources.

The company is working on a few partnerships with companies that don't directly compete, but a lack of margin and the high costs of craftsmanship make partnerships difficult for both parties.

Offline Marketing

Describe how you will use offline-marketing methods to complement your online marketing campaign, such as direct mail, print advertisements, billboards, etc.

WWII Soldier appears at between six and twelve military, history, or aviation-related events per year. Currently, the company employs banners and business cards as marketing tools at events. One major goal is to focus on optimizing advertising efforts at events to convert more event traffic to online consumers. Since there's no current way to measure event traffic conversations, it's difficult to know how many customers came from events.

To provide better data and to entice event browsers to complete an online purchase, a coupon card for new customers with an offer URL could be utilized. This post-card size coupon would be essentially self-distributing, and be an easy to add to purchases. There are risks to this effort, including mass distribution of the code or link to coupon sites, but limiting the coupons to new customers, changing coupon codes on a regular basis, and employing expiration dates will control most of the risk of mass distribution.

The company is also in dire need of upsell scripts for both phone orders and event purchases. *Entrepreneur* notes that scripting exercises result in "More sales, more up-sells and better overall results from your team at all levels" (Sugars).

Currently, the company's cash flow and average order is not high enough to justify running print advertisements in popular military and WWII magazines, however, this should be re-evaluated at the end of six months. Potential magazines for future advertisements include WWII Magazine, America in WWII, Smithsonian Magazine, Reminisce, and VFW Magazine.

PR / Communications Plan

Describe your communications and public relations plan, including which media outlets and bloggers you will be targeting, a PR schedule, and whether you will use a PR wire service.

WWII Soldier is too small for a monthly paid press release service. It will create a newsroom portal on its website and incorporate Pitch Engine, which is free and integrates with the company's website. For high-profile press releases, a firm like PR log may be used to reach more websites.

There are not a lot of specific WWII-related blogs, although there are some portals that do publish WWII information. However, MilitaryHistoryBlog.com, Emily's Vintage Visions and Historically Speaking are sites that should be targeted first.

The UK's Daily Mail regularly publishes interesting tidbits about the Second World War and would be a viable target, although it's unknown if they would accept press releases from an American source.

Social Media

WWII Soldier has a Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and Facebook account as well as a Word Press blog and an onsite blog. These sites are all managed through Hootsuite.

A large majority of our followers are on Facebook, while Instagram works better for event photos, product development and other visual news. Pinterest is primarily used for the distribution of website photos and new products, while Twitter will be mostly used to cross-distribute PR posts from other websites with appropriate hashtags.

WWII Soldier's blog will be used for company information, events, recognition, how-to's, product information, and any other announcements. This is for search engine optimization and company awareness. In addition, the company's owner should consider an off-site blog through a site such as Tumblr or WordPress with a more personal touch.

Media Distribution

Media distribution will vary greatly on the company's current projects. Promotions of events and local appearances will mostly appeal to the following newspapers and publications, however, more generalized or film-related announcements will be sent out to the appropriate respective audiences, which may also include tv networks and magazine publications.

Engle Printing – These are local bi-weekly local newspapers that are distributed throughout the larger region. They have no reporter information, but can be reached via phone (1.800.800.1833), a contact form, or their Facebook page.

York Daily Record – The lifestyles section and their column Retro York are both good fits for various parts of the company business. Their online presence is ydr.com and routinely picks up local York stories. This is the best bet for company news that appeals to a local audience, however, a lack of a brick and mortar presence may hurt the company.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – WWII Soldier has a partnership with a Pittsburgh museum, so those announcements should be shared with the Post-Gazette. It's also one of the largest newspapers in the state, but the company might not be close enough to warrant coverage when not working with Pittsburgh area organizations.

Distribution Schedule

January – Assemble event calendar, watch for Oscar nominations for associated productions.

February – Oscar Nomination press releases should go out.

March – Oscar Week press releases go out for any associated winning productions. Our Event schedule is released in late March. Confirm dates and promote event schedule.

April – Spring production month. Website development and product R&D. Analyze onsite search and other resources to create new product based on site search. Create blog articles and schedule new product posts.

May – Articles on Memorial Day distributed. Find archive photography and other information. Prepare offline PR and marketing materials for Spring Events.

June - D-Day historical information distributed. Prepare website and product copy for related D-day Ohio event in August.

July – Fall production month. Create on and offline PR material for fall events. Focus on D-day.

August – Promote new products developed for D-day Ohio event.

September – Promotion of Rockford Event.

October – Holiday website development, including specific holiday product, and new website home page. Vintage gift research and article generation.

November – Promotion of Veterans day and holiday gifts.

December – Generate Fort Indiantown Gap / Battle of the Bulge PR materials. Winter production month. The company typically has shortened hours during the last two weeks of the month.

To manage blog posts and press distribution schedules, a WordPress integrated service like CoSchedule should be implemented to help keep posts on track.

5: Implementation Plan

Marketing Campaigns & Programs

Identify at least three (3) marketing campaigns that you can immediately implement. For each, be sure to include the campaign name, a campaign description, the marketing objectives for that campaign, the program(s) that the campaign supports, and the specific marketing strategies / tactics that you will use to implement each campaign.

Operation Tip of the Sword: #BeAPathfinder

During WWII, pathfinders were elite, volunteer airborne troops that were deployed in advance to help other troops rally to designated drop zones (MilitaryHistoryNow, 2017).

This program should increase monthly revenue by 10%, create a 30% increase in social media mentions and shares, and gain Instagram awareness.

Operation Pathfinder should increase awareness, goodwill, and gain customer feedback while cashing in on the popularity of services like Loot Crate. Pathfinders will essentially receive a branded parcel of prototype reproductions to test and share. The boxes will have a total value of approximately $30 in reproductions and will include a survey that can be completed online on the products in the package. Pathfinder boxes will also be available for purchase for those reenactors who want to have first dibs on new products.

The company will select and distribute approximately twenty of these for free to reenactors every other month. Half of the Pathfinder parcels will be selected via the #beAPathfinder contest, while the others will be distributed to key reenactors and other brand ambassadors as part of our brand ambassador program.

A landing page will be constructed featuring the story behind the pathfinders, the stories behind some real pathfinders, and will ask reenactors post photos of themselves that most exemplifies the spirit of the pathfinders who served during WWII. They will post the photos on Instagram with the hashtag #beAPathfinder and @WWIISoldier.

Chosen winners will be profiled on the WWII Soldier blog.

Prepare for the Invasion

WWII Soldier sponsors the D-Day Ohio reenactment every year, which is a massive, staged beach landing. However, current response to the sponsorship has been lackluster. A marketing campaign specifically targeted to encourage event attendance, convert attendees into online customers, and build brand awareness at the event.

The key component of this campaign involves a two large installation pieces at the D-Day event. The first, a reproduction recruiting mirror, asks spectators and reenactors to take a good look at themselves and describe courage, as well as instructing them to share the result on twitter with the hashtag #WWIISoldierInvasion. A second photo op installation will consist of a large-scale reproduction inflatable Army tank. Branded, reproduction Invasion leaflets will be handed out and made available for pickup at registration desks. A URL and QR code on the back of the leaflet will allow the user to visit WWIISoldier.com/Invasion landing page and be matched with a soldier who served on D-day and read about their experience.

New, invasion-related products will also be created to support the marketing campaign.

Some Dates are More Important Than Others

Designed to bring awareness to WWII battles, the men and the products that they used, this marketing campaign focuses on a series of videos that emphasizes brand story and awareness. The test video performed remarkably well, with a significant viral response.

Each video will target a major holiday, military event, or other day of remembrance. They will be posted on WWII Soldier's website and will be distributed via social media, as well as by paid Facebook and Youtube ads. The test video was uploaded directly to Facebook, and while it was

frequently shared, it didn't drive enough traffic or develop links. Future videos will employ SEO best practices.

These videos should boost brand awareness and reach a broader market than just reenactors. Also, the videos should boost holiday revenue without using discount codes, mark downs, or other advertising that might be deemed unpatriotic. Since the company is often not in the office on holidays and doesn't make posts, these videos should increase holiday social media interactions by 50-100%, with an increase in holiday sales of at least 10%.

Stuff the Soldiers threw out

Our most popular disposable items, from soap to hand grenades to Army issue toilet paper, will be highlighted in a series of blog posts that can be shared on social media and ran in sponsored ads. This campaign is meant to help promote the SEO efforts as well as the PPC and paid Facebook ads that should be run on a continual basis. A weekly stream of Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook posts should result in as much as a 20% increase in monthly social media traffic.

Instead of taking a more global view, blog posts will examine common personal items and pocket trash of various types of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, and should feature one video a month. Highlighting product and showing original photos of the product in use, as well as the construction process establishes authenticity and should increase sales of products.

6: Evaluation, Control & Continuous Improvement

Measurement & Testing Plan (Analytics)

Establish advertising and site metrics to track, measure and test. Describe tracking methods and testing processes that will be deployed.

The company will continue to use Google Analytics to monitor a variety of site metrics. Priority will be put on website performance indicators such as bounce rate and conversion rate while the website's new design is implemented.

Because the company is small enough, the owner will do a large majority of the monitoring and make suggestions for changes. In some case, these can be executed immediately. However, monthly analytics discussions should be scheduled with team members to make strategy decisions based on changes.

Quarterly usability tests will be used to support analytics testing and make sure that the website continues to perform. Google Optimize will be implemented on individual pages to assess performance.

7: Resources & References

Resources

Itemize any resources that are necessary to implement your IMP and the associated marketing campaigns that you have identified as part of your plan.

Aweber - https://www.aweber.com

CoSchedule - https://coschedule.com

Google Analytics - https://analytics.google.com

Google Optimize - https://optimize.google.com

Hoot Suite - https://hootsuite.com

Mail Chimp - http://mailchimp.com

SpyFu - https://www.spyfu.com

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This section should include a list of references used for this marketing plan and the list should be prepared using APA format.

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