

AGL Marketing Limited



Marketing Air Cadets to Youth



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Using marketing tactics to recruit for air cadets

Case Study of community squadron

Company profile

The Canadian Cadet Program has a direct impact on Canadian society as a whole. Cadets have the opportunity to take part in various leadership roles throughout the program. There is definite value in having well-rounded, community-minded, experienced young people who are ready to assume their places as tomorrow's leaders and decision makers. Truly unique to the Cadet Program is that it offers experiences you cannot get anywhere else! The Cadet Program stimulates an interest in the Sea, Army and Air activities of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). It offers dynamic training in a supportive and efficient environment where change is a positive and essential element.

The mission of the Cadet Program is to contribute to the development and preparation of youth for the transition to adulthood, enabling them to meet the challenges of modern society, through a dynamic, community-based program. The vision of the Cadet Program is a relevant, credible and proactive youth development organization, offering the program of choice for Canada's youth, preparing them to become the leaders of tomorrow through a set of fun, challenging, well-organized and safe activities. The program further commits to attain this vision by living shared Canadian and military values, paying particular attention to:

Loyalty, the expression of our collective dedication to the ideals of the Cadet Movement to all its members;

Professionalism, the accomplishment of all tasks with pride and diligence;

Mutual Respect, the treatment of others with dignity and equality; and

Integrity, the courage and commitment to exemplify trust, sincerity and honesty.

Royal Canadian Air Cadets participate in a variety of fun and challenging activities. There is something for everyone – no matter what their personal interests may be. The outdoor enthusiast will appreciate learning survival skills for flight crew. The athlete will appreciate physical education and recreation, including a variety of sporting activities like biathlon and Olympic-style marksmanship. The artists will find their niche in the music program.

The curious will appreciate the hands-on activities such as building model aircraft. The scholarly will appreciate an introduction to the various tools and technologies linked to aviation. The dreamers will appreciate the evolution of technology and the advancements of the aerospace era, including the importance of Canadian participation. Air Cadets aids in developing knowledge of Canadian history and democracy. The cadet program focuses on social development, decision-making and leadership. As cadets acquire skills and knowledge, they pass it along to younger cadets.

Business situation

The challenge is recruiting youth aged 12 into the ranks of the local squadron in September of each year. Community awareness is a must, along with promotion of the program to children and their parents/grandparents. There is a graduation ceremony each June for the older youth as they age out of the program or enter colleges and university. Promotion and recruitment is commonly left up to word of mouth and visualization at various community events from September through June. Traditionally there is no recruitment or marketing through the summer months (July and August) when students and families take summer vacation. If the ranks fall below a critical mass, the program can be cancelled. It is up to parents working with local officers of the program to fund the program and build the ranks each year.

Solution

There is nothing wrong or weak about the product. It is needed in the community and builds Canada's future leaders. Canada's famous astronaut Chris Hatfield was an air cadet.

The challenge is to market the program 24/7/365 in a way that appeals directly to youth and their parents/grandparents, uncles and aunts.

The concept of an avatar from the movie "Avatar" was developed into a marketing tactic that was both visual and tactile. Grant Lee of AGL Marketing came up with the idea of building a life-sized cutout of a 12-year-old dressed in uniform, handing out a message to passer byes about the value of the program. The cutout would have a unique hook to capture the attention of children and adults alike.

Benefits

Grant Lee of AGL Marketing Limited was a sponsor of the local squadron for 5 years, observing all programs to raise funds to support the program and market its brand. When it became clear that there was no serious marketing to recruit throughout the year and especially during the summer months, he applied marketing tactics to demonstrate how a little marketing and a small budget could make a difference. Lee's experience a professional marketer working with professional groups marketing professional services was an ideal resource at a time when change in the squadron was opportune.

Products and services for the local squadron

- Knowledge of the power of the print medium
- Experience marketing services to youth
- Products for other clients based on unique visuals to attract the attention of youth and adults.
- Community connections and awareness of human behavior through experience as a land development planner to locate the proper place for implementation of the avatar tactic.



GO AIR CADETS



756 Wild Goose Squadron

Drop into the Armory at 91 Todd Road on Monday evenings at 18:30 hr.



Bring your daughter or son and explore an exciting community activity where the sky is not the limit!



www.aircadetleague.com

Hmm... What's in it for me?



- Aerospace
- Survival skills
- Sports
- Music
- Learn about flight
- First aid
- Teaching skills
- Learn how to lead
- Communications
- Awards
- Scholarships
- Target shooting

Creative Thinking

To attract the attention of youth and adults, Lee knew that a cutout was not enough and that most cutouts fail in their messaging because they are not interactive with Generation Y (Millennials and Generation X – parents of millennials). To maximize the effectiveness of the avatar, it was given a name “Bloggins” to humanize the cutout. Where a face would be, is a mirror so that the flash immediately catches the eye, and a youth of the same height of the avatar (an average size of a 12-year-old) would have their face reflected in the mirror. The subliminal message would be “this could be you in the uniform of an air cadet”. The skin, physique, and hair of the avatar was carefully considered to present an androgynous, ethnic-neutral avatar. It could be male or female of any ethnicity.

Lee knew that even this creative was not enough. The avatar had to speak to its audience in more terms than appearance and subliminal messaging.

A pitch card was created that fit within a clear plastic card holder attached to the left hand of the avatar – the hand that is presented when on parade. The right hand remains at attention, showing discipline and decorum. The pitch card explains the value proposition of the brand of the air cadets and has an interactive Web site URL and a QR code that when scanned by a mobile device goes directly to the Web site of the squadron. A handwritten phone number on the card gives a personal pull to make a phone call to the captain of the squadron.

The avatar was stationed 24/7/365 in a section of the community library close to the book and computer section frequented by children and their parents. A second avatar was placed in the local mall in front of a popular clothing store for most of June and July. Cadet Bloggins could be in more than one place at the same time!

AGL Marketing drew on the skills and experience of Erick Vandergeest, president & general manager of gawck | posters, banners, signs & more at www.gawck.ca to produce the avatar and card holder/promotional cards.

Evaluation

The marketing tactic was declared a success by the Captain of the squadron who reported at least eleven new recruits who joined because of first contact with Cadet Bloggins. Interactive cutouts can generate results in the short term. The complete tactic envisioned by Lee was not carried through by the parents. He had planned contests in the local newspaper offering prizes to those who could locate Bloggins and answer a question about youth in the squadron. Only children of enrollment age would be eligible to win. The cutouts were to be moved to more than two locations during the summer to spread visibility and touch more community groups comprised of youth and parents, but that did not happen. Lee considers the tactic very successful noting that the complete plan for rollout and implementation was not executed. The tactic was limited by the will of the parents to get involved in the rollout by spending a few hours during the summer to help market and recruit.