SHOWCASE
KOSCIUSKO COUNTY

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About   Food/Drink   Lakes   Bike

Table of Contents

Showcase Kosciusko County (Showcase) is a project designed to meet a need in Kosciusko County to showcase amenities in order to help attract, retain and build relationships with new and current residents by utilizing a smartphone or mobile device.

Introduction

Showcase aims to achieve three specific goals.

The first goal is identify (by a selected panel) areas to highlight as Kosciusko's showcase features. For example, if Kosciusko County restaurants are the consideration, Cerulean might be identified as a showcase restaurant based on a predetermined, unbiased set of criteria analyzed by the panel. In this example, other restaurants would be listed with Cerulean as the showcase.

The second goal is to showcase the particular venue or item in the highlighted area. In the example provided, Cerulean restaurant is uniquely featured in the Showcase mobile site.

The third goal is to help create relationships between smartphone users and the people represented in the showcase feature, i.e. store, lake, park, etc. Rather than having the Showcase appear as simply an informational listing, a short video of key showcase individuals will share about their business or area with an invitation for the viewer to visit. Additionally, when applicable, a coupon will be offered to the viewer for use at the facility or business. Connections to social media will help with relationship building.

Need

Many cities provide long lists of their restaurants, lakes, motels, etc on websites. Warsaw is no exception. So, at the start of this project, the Showcase group met with Mary Kittrell from KCVB and Tammy Allen from Orthoworx to get their input about the Showcase idea and to determine that the project did not duplicate any work already being done. The meetings confirmed that Kosciusko County has adequate website presence where information about the county amenities is provided by several key organizations. However, Showcase boldly seeks to capitalize on showcase items with a **mobile presence** to draw people into the county, thus supporting the combined missions of a variety of key organizations in Kosciusko County.

Orthoworx is vested in remaining the "Orthopaedic Capital of the World." Showcase's focus on retaining and attracting individuals to Kosciusko County helps with this overall mission (right).

OrthoWorx is a Warsaw-based organization that engages the orthopedic industry, the community and educational system to support long-term sustainability and growth of the orthopedic sector.

We do this through focusing on six strategic areas—our initiatives: Education, Talent & Workforce Development, Community Enhancement, Innovation & Research, Transportation & Logistics, Branding & Awareness

The mission of the Warsaw/Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce is to be the advocate of business in stimulating economic growth and diversity, promoting educational excellence and coordinating action on issues of community importance.

Additionally, the local Warsaw/Kosciusko County Chamber of Commerce; which is a well-established organization, is aligned with the objective of

Showcase Kosciusko County (left).

Kosciusko County Economic Development is interested in the following elements consistent with the Showcase project:

- A four-pronged strategic plan starting with **retention** focusing on understanding the needs and challenges of existing local business in order to help those companies thrive.

- **expansion**

- **attraction**

- **Innovation** woven throughout everything done to maintain and inspire a local culture of innovation in order to keep local companies competitive and attract investment from outside the community (KEDCO).

Showcase also supports the goals of our current mayor, Joseph Thallemer. In a March 1, 2013 *Times-Union* column, Mayor Thallemer urged residents to buy locally (Warsaw.in.gov.) The challenge to motivate consumers to keep business within the county increases as consumers have access to buying options such as Amazon, eBay, and other online purchasing opportunities. Developing relationships is the key. In this new Relationship Era, it is individuals talking about a company or a brand via social networks, not marketers, that shapes buyers' perceptions. Buyers are making decisions based on input from people they trust and buying from companies that share their values. We have moved into the relationship era of marketing and companies who recognize this are successful. (Garfield & Levy, 2013).

Showcase has the potential to generate more and/or new business for Kosciusko business owners through the relationship building component. Video feeds of local "celebrities" can create some familiarity with those individuals for the smartphone user prior to actually meeting them. Using a location feature, businesses can be notified through social media when a

Showcase user enters their establishment. This provides the opportunity for a personal greeting (by name, perhaps). Users can provide feedback for other users via social media. Familiarity breeds comfort and both can contribute to customer retention.

PROJECT

The Showcase project is also aligned with the need to remain technologically current to better serve all visitors and citizens of Kosciusko County. Every year, thousands of visitors descend upon Kosciusko County for the variety of arts and entertainment activities. Grace College alone reports that close to 1,800 prospective students visit the area each year. When parents are added to the number, there are close to 4,000 visitors for one organization. Consider the number of visitors to the county and data about smartphone usage together and the benefit of Showcase becomes apparent. Smartphone use is increasing as supported by the following:
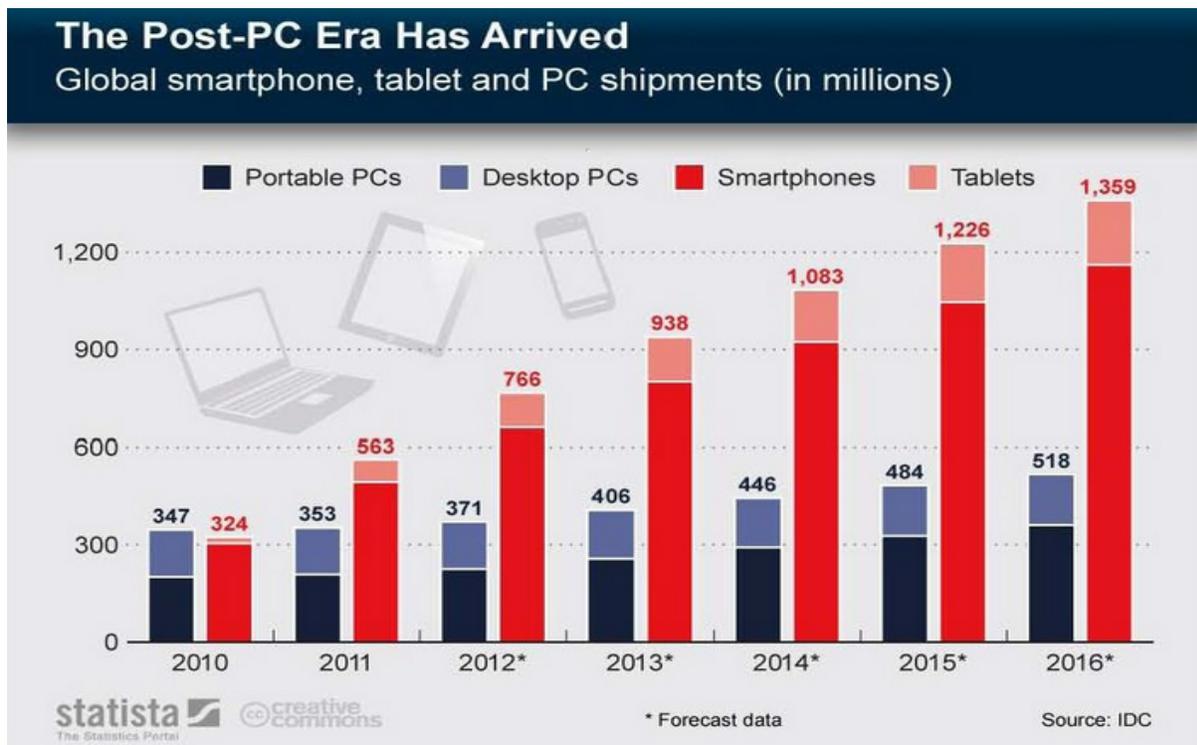
The number of **smartphones** used globally is approaching a billion and will continue to grow through 2016. This translates into **one in every seven people worldwide owning a handheld device** that works like a computer.
(Statista, 2013).

There is little question that smartphone usage is increasing, and because of their mobility, provide a constant connection to consumers. Kosciusko County can utilize this technology to its benefit by creating awareness of the many amenities it offers, particularly to visitors and new residents.

While many websites are available to provide an abundance of information about the county, mobile devices are preferred for the types of experiences needed for Showcase to support the goals of our county organizations.

Results from a 2012 mobile user survey revealed three top usages for smartphones:

1. Accessing local information 88%

2. Searching for information 82%

3. Social media and networking 76% (Keynote, 2012)

Without the Showcase mobile presence, the current browsing experience is limited to the less desirable mobile website. The difference is illustrated in the example below:

DESKTOP SITE   MOBILE SITE
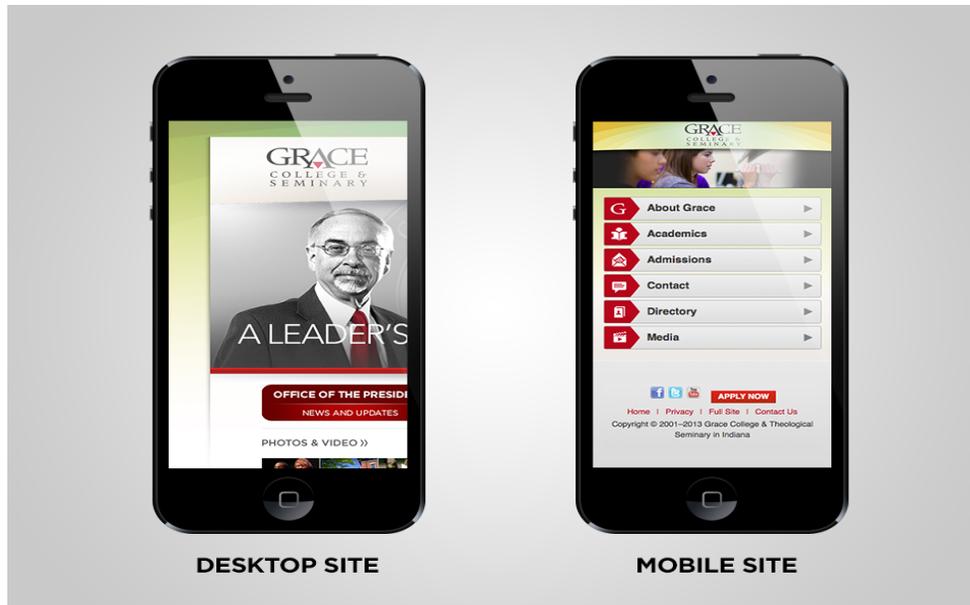
Showcase will combine the information provided about Kosciusko County on multiple websites into one, easy-to-use mobile site. The Showcase project group hired the services of Matt Frazier to develop a mock up mobile site to provide an example of how a mobile site or app can be categorized and of how it will work. Although not exhaustive, the initial list of areas to be included is: food/drink, lakes, bike trails, art, gardens, architecture, events, sports, non-profit, and education (Although the Showcase team chose a mobile website for the mock up to conserve costs, it needs to be stated that the mobile app was preferred over mobile websites for map information, food, entertainment, travel and shopping) (Keynote, 2012)..

Each category will have a showcase highlight with as many other participants for that category as are beneficial. GPS and social media capability to enhance the mobile experience is included in the model of the Showcase project. Organizations selecting to be featured will have options such as general information,video, photography, menus, price lists, coupons, etc . Below is a mockup of the design the Showcase group funded.

COST/SUSTAINABILITY

The cost of the Showcase project will certainly depend on how the project is managed and whether a mobile site or mobile app is chosen. Below are some generic examples of the cost to develop a mobile app.

- **Simple, table-based app - $1,000-4,000** The customer provides all the content and clear direction. Additional costs are incurred for GPS locators, Social media integration or bells and whistles.

- **Database App (native) – $8,000-$50,000** The customer provides every piece of content, image, writing, sound, etc. The cost comes from creating the logic within the app and architecting all the usability.

- **Web Services** – *$1,000-$5,000* – This takes the content to a remote access point so updating the app with XML files instead of raw code changes can be done.

- **Share Capabilities** – *$500-$1,500* – This is for social media (twitter, facebook) and emailing. (Thomas, 2013).

As previously stated, the Showcase product featured in this paper is a mobile site, rather than an app, since the cost of a mobile site is less. The cost for complete mobile site build-out/development was estimated at $750-$1,000 compared to the costs above. Showcase could become either a mobile site (works well also with tablets) or a mobile app. However, a mobile website can reach nearly five times as many people *per dollar invested* than a native mobile app (Maxwell, 2011 February 24).

Undoubtedly, the mobile site and/or app will require some management to sustain it. Recognizing the need for personnel to manage the project, a recommended organizational model is included with this project. First of all, critical to the success of Showcase are the partnerships of key organizations such as Orthoworx, KedCo, The Chamber of Commerce, the City of

Warsaw, the Town of Winona Lake, the Visitor's Bureau and others. Each organization will have the opportunity to appoint a member of their group to serve in an advisory capacity. Additionally from these groups, support through funding will be important. Once the mobile presence has been created, the cost to sustain it should be moderate. Of course, the more organizations that are involved, the smaller the portion of funding that will be needed from each organization. Together, the organization representatives will choose a Project Manager to oversee the development of and to sustain the project. The Project Manager will be responsible to supervise the project with the staff of both an Information Technology person and an administrator. An unbiased panel should be selected to choose Showcase categories and the Showcase highlights. The following chart illustrates a possible organizational structure:

*Not a complete listing of potential funders and collaborators

** Panel will include all socioeconomic demographics

Conclusion: *USE OF GRANT*

Showcase Kosciusko County is a both needed and sustainable project designed to serve visitors experience Kosciusko County's unique features as well as provide enticing options for consumers to explore local businesses. Dollars spent on this project will benefit the county.

To provide justification for the $1,000 grant, the Showcase group asked Matt Frazier, Graphic Design/Webmaster and designer of the Showcase mock up, to provide an estimate of costs and options for the mobile site. His itemized list is as follows:

- Complete build out of all mobile site pages

- Compatibility with all major smartphones and tablets

- Mobile site design (beginning at $300.00)

- GPS directions to guide user to each place of interest

- Social Media Integration (i.e. Facebook)

- Coupon Integration

- Hosting ($100.00 per year)

- Domain (www.showcasekos.com) ($100.00 to set up this website on its own server

- Maintenance and Ongoing Support

- Updates

- Desktop site with QR code to scan with mobile phone which would make the mobile website viewable on a desktop if desired

- Initial Troubleshooting , after grant is exhausted troubleshooting would run at about $20.00 an hour

All of the above could be accomplished with the $1,000 grant; however, there are some anticipated repeated costs that would not be covered by the grant (this is where the community partners will have responsibility). Those additional costs are as follows:

- Hosting after the first year at $100.00 per year

- Personalized videos for featured places of interest at $165.00 per video

Whether a family desires a short stay on a Kosciusko County Lake, wants to explore local schools due to relocating, or is a lifetime resident of Kosciusko County looking for a good place to enjoy Saturday night dinner, Showcase has the answer. Kosciusko County is full of hidden treasures that Showcase is designed to uncover. With Showcase, an interactive tour of the beautiful Kosciusko County will be fingertip accessible.

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