



SUGARLOAF MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS

Research, Action and Evaluation Report

Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard in Dickerson, Maryland is the perfect destination for an event or just an afternoon away. Its largest issue however is that it is tucked away and many people don't even know that it exists. The Vineyard is located in upper Montgomery County, Maryland and is the only winery/vineyard in Montgomery Country. Since its opening in 2006, Sugarloaf has surprised everyone with their award-winning wines and spectacular views, but that just isn't enough.

Just outside our nation's capital, Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards is the unexpected escape from the hustle of Washington, DC. I believe that Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards has a lot of potential but isn't meeting simple advertising bullet points. While there is an active website and Twitter, neither of these are pleasing enough to the eye to make potential visitors intrigued. If someone were to Google search "Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards," assorted pictures of their iconic red barn show up but none are great quality images, and there is very little information past that. The logo is not bad, by any means, but it is the only consistent piece of branding both on their products and within their marketing attempts. As the Public Relations Director for Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards, I think a complete rebranding of the company is necessary to revitalize the business. Visitors of the Vineyards are very loyal and become members of the family, but a company's growth is only as strong as its marketing. SMV has a great family backstory that I believe is really important for people to know about and that needs to be advertised and shared more. Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards has the potential to grow exponentially, especially with it being the only Vineyard in Montgomery County, MD. The location also provides the ability to become popular to visitors from Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. I will require a team of 3people to assist in rebranding, advertising, research, graphic design, etc. I expect that we as a team can accomplish this task in

approximately 8 months of in-depth, hands-on work. We will research current customers, as well as analyzing the client-base of similar size vineyards in the area. We will take this data into consideration when establishing a proper plan of action for new media, marketing and advertising. As I've said, this is a large project to undertake, however it is very attainable if the proper amount of attention is given. My team and I are capable of solving these issues because we will account for data and personal experience, as well as analyzing and testing out each idea before completely putting it into action.

My top three objectives to help reinvent the brand of Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard are: create a stronger brand identity, redesign the Vineyard website and establish a presence on social medias such as Twitter and Instagram. Each of these will be a large project but the work will be well worth it in the end. These ideas will help overcome the lack of word of mouth and advertising that is currently in place. While budget may be an issue, due to the long period of time possibly required, it is something that can be reestablished and the door can be reopened whenever necessary – money should not be the thing holding the company back from reinventing themselves. In all honesty, I don't believe that there are any large enough obstacles to truly block our progress. With a staff of 3, and myself, this project can be handled under a budget, time constraints and with any staff issues that may arise. The approximate duration of my campaign is 8 months, which includes research, planning, implementation, testing, reevaluation and then implementation again. There is no one aspect of my campaign that is more or less important than another because each aspect will be extremely beneficial in its own sort, and they will eventually all go hand in hand with each other. With the implementation of these new communication devices, I hope Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard gains a stronger client base to, in turn, grow the company. Each communication device and objective has its own purpose. Establishing a stronger brand identity is crucial because it is how one presents themselves as a company. A brand identity means utilizing the same color patterns, logos, letterhead, and other visual aspects to show uniformity throughout the company. Redesigning the website is vital because consumers like researching what they are purchasing and learning about a company is important to many people. By having a more visually appealing and easy to understand website, people will be more willing to visit the website and therefore more willing to visit the Vineyard itself. Lastly, in the current year of 2015, social media has become so important and relevant but also very misunderstood by older generations. Social media is a simple and straight-forward partial

solution to any advertising issue – it can help without paying a cent, or it can be irrelevant with no effort. With ideas as simple as creating a branded hashtag to use on both Twitter or Instagram, anyone who comes to visit Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards has a quick way of creating a connection for the future and staying connected and wanting to come back again. Beyond making hashtags to use, having active social media profiles for the company will give Sugarloaf a stronger online presence and make us more readily available for information, even more so than a website. While these three ideas are my largest objectives, it doesn't stop here! These are just the first step because they cannot be started and then left alone. Each of these communication devices takes upkeep and that is *crucial* to the revamping of Sugarloaf. This project will provide so much room for growth and will help Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyard begin to reach the potential that it has!

Determining the success or failure of this campaign will not be a simple answer. It will take a lot of post-implementation research to establish if any changes, either positive or negative, have occurred. If even 5 more people create memberships with the Bacchus Club and there are at least 10 more monthly visitors to the grounds, I will consider this a success. As I've said, this project is not a one-and-done type of deal; this project needs upkeep and will need to be continued to ensure the success and growth of Sugarloaf. If executed properly, and if provided with the proper tools for success, this campaign can grow Sugarloaf Mountain Vineyards to a size they never expected, and could never ask for, but *are* extremely achievable.