Introducing college students to the adventure lifestyle in West Virginia
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This campaign is focused on connecting 79,000 college students enrolled in colleges and universities across the state with Adventures on the Gorge. This cross-generational target audience is made up of youngest Millennials and the oldest of Generation Z. We have coined them throughout this campaign as GenZennials. This campaign is built to increase sales and raise brand awareness among these college students while they are living in the state. Planting the “adventure lifestyle” seed early will lead this audience to return and vacation with Adventures on the Gorge in the future.

GenZennials want personalized marketing tactics, not marketing messages that market to a stereotype. Authentic, original and sharable content is immensely important to reaching them effectively. Adventures on the Gorge is built off authenticity. Relaying your message effectively to this audience will build a strong connection with them. Introducing them to this adventurous, exciting and beautiful place in West Virginia is surely something they will always remember.

This campaign will take place in the fiscal year of 2018. We integrate traditional and digital media to target these college students positioned at colleges and universities throughout the state. All the tactics used are to persuade this audience to search out more information and visit Adventures on the Gorge during their college years. We letting them know Adventures on the Gorge will create life-long memories and unforgettable experiences.

The content our team has produced to publish throughout this campaign showcases the beauty and adventure available at Adventures on the Gorge. Providing exciting, engaging and innovative content to this audience is key, and our team has carefully designed, produced and positioned each advertisement throughout this campaign.
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Located on the rim of the New River Gorge, one of the most scenic locations in West Virginia.
- Authentic adventure resort, built by men who are legends in the white water rafting industry.
- AOTG has an excellent staff who is knowledgeable, experienced and helpful.
- Inclusive resort destination.
- Active and engaging social media content posted regularly.
- Canyon Falls Swimming Pool, new lodge, great restaurants with local menu options.

WEAKNESSES

- Geographical location, West Virginia has been coined a "dying state" by some demographers, estimating the state is losing more than 46,000 people by 2030, with the largest decline of prime working age population (24-30) (Leins, 2017).
- Website is generic when compared to competing adventure outfitters.
- Price, resort fees make prices higher compared to smaller competition with no resort fees.
- Small loyalty program for returning visitors and adventurers.
- Low brand awareness by college students who aren't originally from West Virginia.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Availability of acquisitions, there are over 79,000 college students throughout the state of West Virginia.
- Adventure awareness is increasing, especially in the GenZennial generation.
- Potential to partnerships with statewide educational institutions and offer students group discounts.
- Potential for industry growth, West Virginia's whitewater rafting industry saw a 3 percent increase in visitors in 2015 (Davis, 2016).
- AOTG offers a resort style experience, offering a more personalized experience for guests and GenZennials want a unique, authentic experience.

THREATS

- Declining whitewater rafting industry in 2000 the rafting industry in West Virginia rafted about 220,000 people, last year they barely rafted 100,000 (Ross, 2017).
- Declining state support for the tourism industry in West Virginia, a low budget doesn’t allow for the right exposure to grow the industry throughout the state.
- Competition from other vacation destinations continue to present a threat to Adventures on the Gorge, along with the internal competition in the area.
- Seasonality of the adventure activities, during late fall, winter and early spring months prevents vacations to participate in a majority of activities.
BRAND POSITIONING

CURRENT

Adventures on the Gorge understands the importance of evocative content. Adventures on the Gorge is a brand with a story, a brand with a unique history, a brand that boasts passionate people who believe their mission and deliver an experience their guests love. That’s the ace in the hole that will separate Adventures on the Gorge from its competitors and other adventure resorts. While other brands do their best to create stories, Adventures on the Gorge actually has compelling, authentic stories.

Their current voice on their website is clear and informative, but it’s generic. There’s not much that differentiates Adventures on the Gorge from other outfitters throughout the country. It’s missing heart, it’s missing adventure, it is missing Adventures on the Gorge!

RECOMMENDED BRAND POSITION

Adventures on the Gorge needs to tell its story. It’s an iconic and authentic adventure resort, and built by men who are legends in the rafting industry. Their stories stand the test of time and deserve to be told through evocative imagery and compelling text. Adventures on the Gorge says what it means without relying on boasts or bold proclamations. It’s an inclusive resort. Adventures on the Gorge has activities for everyone, it is not just about rafting; it’s about the adventure lifestyle.

Adventures on the Gorge takes a stand and has a pivotal role to play in social issues that its consumer hold near and dear. Green issues like clean water or and conservation are two that immediately come to mind. It’s a winning bet that these issues will become more and more important to your consumers in the future. Bet on your values. Believe in them. Produce content that speaks to that!
**INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY STATEMENT**

**RATIONALE FACTORS**
- Largest, inclusive adventure resort in West Virginia
- Only adventure resort that sits on the rim of the New River Gorge
- Incomparable beauty of the New River Gorge
- Experienced, authentic and committed staff and customer service
- Variety of lodging options, from 5-star cabins to campsites
- AOTG offers activities for everyone, from extreme thrill Enthusiasts to beginners
- World-class whitewater rafting
- For beginner to experienced adventurers

**EMOTIONAL FACTORS**
- I want to go to Adventures on the Gorge while I’m living in WV in college and experience the adrenaline adventure sports offer
- I love being outside and being active
- I’ve always wanted to try different adventure and high intensity sports
- I want to experience Adventures on the Gorge, but I’m nervous because haven’t participated in outdoor sports before
- I love seeing West Virginia, it is a beautiful state.
- Interested in the beautiful landscape surrounding AOTG

**DISCARDED ICSS STATEMENTS**
- Adventure experiences in West Virginia is our life and our business, join the adventure lifestyle today!
- Once in a lifetime experiences are our life and business, join the adventure lifestyle today!
- Once-in-a-lifetime experiences, once-in-a-lifetime adventures, unforgettable memories!

**INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY STATEMENT**
- Epic adventures, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, lifelong memories

**ICSS RATIONAL**
This statement shows the commitment to an Unforgettable, authentic experience when you choose to visit Adventures on the Gorge. Visitors are not just passively vacationing; they are actively participating in every aspect of each adventure and immersing themselves in the Adventures on the Gorge lifestyle. Adventures on the Gorge wants to reach this audience while they are young and in college. This campaign will plant the “adventure lifestyle” seed early, provide a quality experience and retain them as customers when they are older, bringing their friends and families back to Adventures on the Gorge for years to come!
Social Media: Facebook and Instagram Ads

Adventures on the Gorge produces high-quality video and high-resolution images, and the example of the Facebook and Instagram ad take advantage of that. The Facebook ad is a aerial drone video of rafters cruising down the Upper Guley River. The Instagram ad sponsors an image of zip liners soaring high above the New River Gorge.

Both ads mention discounts for college students in the West Virginia, along with daring, exciting copy, engaging content and the hashtag #BeEpic.

The real advantage of these ads is ability to reach the primary target audience by targeting through social media advertising. You can focus the ads to reach many of the characteristics that make up the campaigns primary target market.
360-Video, Google Cardboard

The primary target market perceives an appetite for adventure, and the use of 360° video is an effective and exciting way to introduce them to the adventure lifestyle.

In the first ad, pop on a virtual reality headset (or just spin around with your cursor on the video’s desktop version) for a stunning view of rafting down the New River Gorge with a group of friends from the perspective of a dude or dudette crushing a huge wave! Twist the camera in any direction to see the roar of rushing water towering above you—imposing enough to be thrilling and beautiful at the same time! The same experience will be portrayed for other activities, including zip lining, rock climbing, aerial adventures and hiking to some of the most scenic overlooks.

Each experience will have crisp, clear video and audio, masterfully paced and captured to allow viewer to dive into these adventures. The ads copy will read: Now it’s your turn! #BeEpic with Adventures on the Gorge!
360-Video, Google Cardboard

Sending branded Google Cardboard to the Greek Life students at West Virginia University and Marshall University provides an easy, branded, tangible viewing device for the viewer. This folded cardboard piece morphs into a pair virtual reality goggles, allowing the viewer to watch our 360-degree videos in a sensory captivating way.

Customer centricity, complete immersion, brand recognition, innovative, word of mouth will be at the core when developing this experience for our target market.