**Project Title:** Web development & Marketing, CT Apple Marketing Board

**Awardee:** CT Apple Marketing Board

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**Web Development & Marketing, CT Apple Marketing Board**

**Project Summary**

The main goal of the CAMB efforts was to increase awareness of the apple crops and orchards in Connecticut, and utilize print, web and social media to its best potential. Our website was stagnant and not interactive, we had no childrens’ marketing program, and mobile aspects of websites and communications were becoming the norm, instead of a specialty. Our social media was fairly new, our Facebook presence was marginal and we needed to reach out and grab our consumers’ attention in any and every way we could. Print advertising was not an asset any longer and there was a need to upgrade our marketing efforts in a broader category and drive consumers to where the orchards are.

**Project Approach**

In order to accomplish the projects, materials were gathered, photos and videos were taken, the website was updated, graphics for print and digital mediums were created and plans were put into motion. Projects included:

1. A new and improved highly visual website readily available from desktop, tablet or smartphone. <http://www.ctapples.org/>
2. New CT Apples mobile [APP](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/ct-apples/id968943323?ls=1&mt=8), making it easy to find orchards and information from any smartphone or tablet. It allowed push notifications to any specific geographic area.
3. [Updated print information](http://www.ctapples.org/signage) for distribution at orchards, presentations and public venues including:
* Childrens’ Brochures
* Growers Brochures
* Variety Brochures
* Postcards
* Apple Variety Posters
* “How Does an Apple Grow” poster
* 24 page PowerPoint “How an Apple Grows”
* “What’s New in 2015” for Orchards
* Educational Sequence cards to accompany “The Apple Riddle” with Ag in the Classroom Volunteers
* Signage

4.) Created QR Codes for:

* [Orchard Row Signs](http://www.ctapples.org/signage) ( 21 the most popular apple varieties)
* [Point-of-Purchase](http://www.ctapples.org/signage) signage ( 21 the most popular apple varieties)
* Web graphics
* Mobile APP signage
* Web signage
* Downloadable PDF for retail use and educational activities.

5.) [Loyalty Programs](http://www.ctapples.org/marketing-materials-2015):

* Children’s Passport and tote bag
* Mobile APP loyalty program
* Loyalty Card Program

6.) Radio and Print Ads

* 2/3 page print ad and medium digital ad for “CT Grown” Magazine , Jan 2017
* 15 second radio ad spots for WNTY and WMRQ (60/68)

7.) Social Media Programs

* Created ads directed to [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/ctapples) and [Website](http://www.ctapples.org/) engagement to increase traffic and fan base.
* Built up our [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/ctapples/) boards and promoted on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/ctapples)
* Added [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ctapples/) to reach another audience and also cross-promote posts efficiently on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/ctapples) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ctapples) at the same time.

**Goals and Outcome Achieved**

 Our website, mobile APP and Social Media sites became a hub of activity and a resource for consumers and orchards alike. We networked with Industry Partners to spread the word and get the most use out of all of our projects. Our original 700 Facebook base increased to over 12,000 fans. We increased our Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram following.

 The Children’s brochure was extremely popular and requests for reprints or files the orchards could print themselves were requested. Posters for “How an Apple Grows” and “Apple Varieties”

Were requested and reprinted. They were handed out at presentations, and sent to Food Corp and CT Food Service Directors for distribution throughout the CT schools.

 The childrens’ programs were well received between Ag in the Classroom and our Story-telling educator. Over 40 classes received sequence cards to go along with the book. Six schools were involved with the story telling / educational programs. Each school ranged from 2-3 classes to the entire school to learn about apples.

Some social media progress included:

Jan 3, 2014- Sept 2016: Facebook: 4,843 fans to 11,933 fans (59% increase)

Jan 1- September 29, 2016: Facebook: 11,933 fans (up 1, 1861)

Weekly Page Engaged Users: The number of people who engaged with your Page. Engagement includes any click or story created. (Unique Users): **69,046**

Daily Total Reach: The number of people who have seen any content associated with your Page. (Unique Users) **334,046**

Weekly Total Reach: The number of people who visited your Page, or saw your Page or one of its posts in news feed or ticker. These can be people who have liked your Page and people who haven't. (Unique Users) **1,593,008**

Weekly Organic Reach: The number of people who visited your Page, or saw your Page or one of its posts in news feed or ticker. These can be people who have liked your Page and people who haven't. (Unique Users) **569,345**

Weekly Paid Reach of Page posts: The number of people who saw your Page posts in an ad or sponsored story. (Unique Users) **934,148**

Weekly Total Impressions of your posts: The number of impressions that came from all of your posts. (Total Count) **3,359,061**

Weekly Paid Reach: The number of people who saw a sponsored story or ad pointing to your Page. (Unique Users) **1,023,633**

Weekly People Talking About This: The number of people sharing stories about your page. These stories include liking your Page, posting to your Page's timeline, liking, commenting on or sharing one of your Page posts, answering a question you posted, responding to one of your events, mentioning your Page, tagging your Page in a photo or checking in at your location. (Unique Users) **34,550**

Twitter: 173 Followers

Instagram: 181 Followers

2016:

Pinterest: Average Monthly Views: **1,539 (up 276.24%)**

Average Monthly Engaged Users: **22 (Up 393.33 %)**

**23 Boards / 962 pins / 177 followers (+ 33%)**

2014-2016

Pinterest: Views: **1,680,823**

Average Monthly Engaged Users: **26,430**

Website: Aug 2015-Sept 2016: 8,807 Sessions / 7,481 Users / 15,541 Pageviews / 1.75 pages per session /1:04 Session Duration / 67.23 % Bounce Rate 84.85% New Sessions

For documentation support this information go to: [**http://www.ctapples.org/scbg-recap**](http://www.ctapples.org/scbg-recap)

**Presentations :**

* CT Pomoligical Society Annual Meetings (3) average 90-100 attendees
* BIG E (5 days in 3 years) Approximately 50,000 attendees come through the CT Building each day.
* SNACT School Nutrition Association of CT: Over 200 attendees that brought back info to over half the schools in CT
* CT Ag Day at the State Capitol: 2014, 2015, 2016 / The annual Ag Day at the Capitol drew more than 40 agricultural-related exhibitors and a crowd of attendees including farmers, students and members of the General Assembly. CT Apple Marketing Board handed out apples, literature and answered questions on growing, varieties and more.
* CT Pomological Society Twilight Meetings: 2014, 2015, 2016: An average of 30-40 industry attendees were apprised of grant progress at each meeting.
* [Coventry Farmers Market Apple Tasting 2016](https://www.facebook.com/events/573198632888785/) Approximately 400 people received samples of apples at the apple tasting and were exposed to posters, postcards and brochures.
* Orchard visits: Contractor took Sam the Scarecrow to orchards and photographed customers and delivered materials. 12-14 visits with an average of 100-500 customers engaged each weekend.
* Passport and Loyalty card redemption: Redeemed $935 in coupons ranging from $2.50 to $4.00

Networking: The CAMB offered support, materials (print and digital) and reciprocity with the following agencies (and more)

* CT Department of Agriculture
* Start with Half A Cup
* CT Department of Education
* CT Department of Administrative Services
* UCONN Extension
* CT Pomological Society
* CT Food Corp
* End Hunger CT
* Buy CT Grown

**Beneficiaries**

The general public, farmers markets, schools and other educational programs, orchards, industry partners and businesses that purchase from the orchards all benefited from the efforts of the marketing programs. There was a lot of cross-promotion on all materials, especially childrens materials. QR code signage in the orchards benefited the orchards (in knowledge base and time saved) and consumers (ready access). Mobile phone users were the strongest hits on the website analytics. We gave them an easier option to find orchards, one they may not have followed through on if there was no app. A large portion of our Facebook fans are from NY, the orchards benefitted from the ads reaching out beyond the borders into NY, RI and MA.

**Lesson Learned**

The biggest lesson was if you can’t give a program to every single orchard attendee at every single orchard, the program has a higher chance of failure. There were higher expectations of the Childrens Passport and the Loyalty Programs. Two things in particular hindered a better redemption on them. 1.) We gave 50-100 passports to each orchard. This was because of printing and and (possible) redemption costs. If they could not hand one out to every child, they would hand out none. Some orchards used them for one class project, with success. The loyalty cards were an extra effort in a busy and hectic retail situation and the orchards were hesitant to hand them out because it required more work and training for an already stretched, seasonal work staff. Smaller orchards that have a more personal, one-on-one rapport with their customers fared better. The mobile APP was also extra work. While smartphones are increasing, some growers still rely on older phones and don’t have a comfort zone with the mobile app. There is not an easy way to support a standardized loyalty / coupon program when each orchard is so diverse, from small scale to large wholesale production.

**Contacts Person(s)**

**Additional Information**

Samples and supporting documents can be found at:

[**http://www.ctapples.org/scbg-recap**](http://www.ctapples.org/scbg-recap)

This is a non-public page but can be reached by link. The password for the Growers Pages is: Macsuga

Sjm 11/10/2016