



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH and PARKS



Balancing and Serving the Needs of Outdoor Enthusiasts through Customer Service and New Technology

Presented by: Emily Kiel and Nick Harrington

Overview

- Connecting with Customers
- Integrating New Technologies
 - Communicating Change
- Marketing to New Audiences
 - Enhancing R3 Efforts
- Optimizing Organizational Efforts



About GFP



First, let's talk a little about who we are at South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks.

Our Mission and Vision



Our vision is to conserve our state's outdoor heritage to enhance the quality of life for current and future generations.

Our mission is to serve and connect people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries and wildlife resources.



Our Priorities



Habitat and Access

- Expand and create new partnerships with landowners and conservation groups.
- Enhance South Dakota's strong outdoor heritage by providing additional public access.

Asset Management

- Provide superior outdoor recreational experiences by showcasing South Dakota's natural landscapes and world class state park system.
- Actively recruit, retain and reactivate outdoor enthusiasts.

Operation Excellence

- Employee engagement and maximize Team GFP's productivity.

Customer Service

- Deliver excellent customer service and meet our customers where they are.
- Omnichannel approach-innovative technology and meaningful experiences.



Meeting Customers Where They Are

In Person

- Our regional offices are open Monday-Friday for walk-in traffic.
- GFP staffs booths at major events, such as sport shows, the South Dakota State Fair, Dakotafest and other high-profile events.

In Their Inboxes

- We utilize iContact to reach 1.9 million email subscribers with 15-17 million messages each year.

In Their Feeds

- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube to share specific content across each platform.



In the Field

Habitat and Access is the #1 priority for our department.

- To reach landowners where they are, GFP hired eight additional private land habitat biologists to bring the total number to 12 across the state.

Self-service kiosks were placed at 96 locations across the state for individuals to purchase park entrance licenses.

- These are available at all times to customers wishing to purchase their park entrance license with a credit card.

Reminding individuals of regulations if they are stopped by a Conservation Officer after a successful day.

- Timely reminders shared via email and on social media prior to major seasons and timeframes.

New Technologies | Go Outdoors South Dakota

On December 15, 2021, GFP launched Go Outdoors South Dakota.

- This system allows customers to:
 - Purchase and Apply for Licenses
 - Make Camping Reservations
 - Purchase Park Entrance Licenses
 - Manage Friends and Family Members' Accounts

The screenshot displays the Go Outdoors South Dakota website. At the top left is the South Dakota Wildlife logo. The navigation menu includes links for Home, Buy Fish / Hunt Licenses, Limited Draws, Camping Reservations / Parks, Your Harvest Surveys, and Shop / Donate. Below the navigation is a secondary menu with links for Purchase Licenses / Permits, Submit Harvest Surveys, Limited Draws, Create / Manage Your Account, Camping Reservations, and Regulations. The main content area features five large, colorful buttons: Buy Fish / Hunt Licenses, Limited Draws, Camping Reservations / Parks, Your Harvest Surveys, and Shop / Donate. Below these buttons is a section titled "License Activity Packages" with a sub-header "Packages ensure you have everything you need based on the fishing / hunting activity you would like to participate in." Underneath, there is a section for "Annual License Packages" featuring two packages: "Resident Freshwater Hunting Package" for \$24.95 and "Prairie Dog / Predator / Furbearer Package" for \$25.00. Each package has a "View Details" button.



Communicating Change

Major changes require major communications efforts.

- Feature every tool in the toolbox.
 - In the News
 - Press release sent on January 3, 2022
 - In the Inboxes
 - 3,101,687 Emails Sent
 - 929,492 Emails Opened
 - In the Feeds
 - 870,708 Reached on Facebook
 - 15,783 Views on Tutorial Videos on YouTube
 - In the Office
 - Extra customer service hours provided for elk application period.

57,971 Total Traffic Driven to Go Outdoors South Dakota



Making Data Driven Decisions

- It's not all about the numbers, but it is about the right message, at the right time, in the right location.
- Collecting and understanding data is key to determining that right timing and location.
- Data points include:
 - Email Open Rates
 - Social Media Reach
 - Actions Taken (Clicks)



Case Study: Elk Applications

The South Dakota elk season drawing was the first major application period with the new Go Outdoors South Dakota.

- We generally receive 37,000 applications for this season.
- Communicating this deadline and how to navigate the system was going to be paramount for our customers.
- We planned a multi-pronged approach focused on:
 - Putting together detailed emails with links to tutorial videos.
 - Sharing tutorial videos on our social media channels.
 - Offering additional customer service hours at our offices.
 - Widely spreading the message of the application deadline, as it had been delayed with the new system.



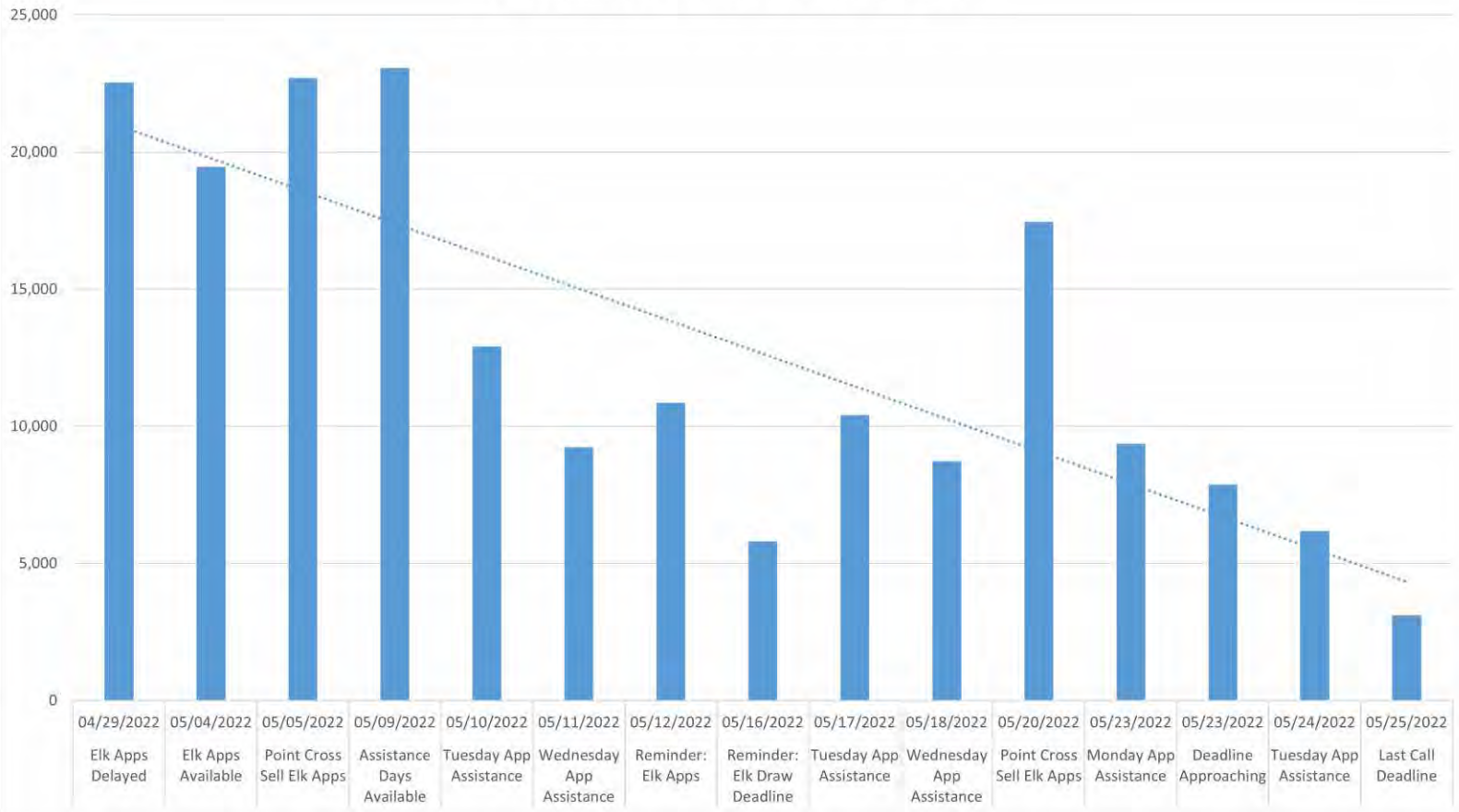
Elk Applications on Social Media

- Email has always been our best way to inform individuals of these applications, but the buzz on social media was loud about the apps in the new system.
- We knew that answering these questions and putting the right information on social media was going to be the key to success in this specific situation.
- We wanted to be aggressive, posting early and often about the deadline and the application assistance days.
 - But remember...success comes from the right message at the right time...

And Our Reach Declined Steadily



Elk Application Deadline Facebook Post Reach





Lessons Learned

- As the application period progressed, we continued to see a steady decline on the number of people our posts were reaching.
- Content of a post is everything, and you did see one post focused specifically on a common issue individuals were having perform quite well.
 - But overall, posting fatigue was a serious issue here.
- Fortunately, we did set a record number of applications for the elk season, surpassing our prior benchmark of 37,000 apps!

Marketing Automation



We've discussed how communication plays into your customer service, now let's focus on how marketing can recruit, retain and reactivate your customers.

Marketing and R3



- **Why does this matter? An example:**
 - Marketing attracts pheasant hunters.
 - Pheasant hunters purchase licenses.
 - License dollars support habitat and access improvements.
 - Habitat and access improvements increase bird numbers and public land hunting opportunities.
 - Increased bird numbers and hunting opportunities attract increase hunters.
 - **REPEAT!**
- **When we get more individuals in the field, the more opportunities there are for these individuals in the future.**

Audience Segmentation



- To meet individuals where they are, you first need to know who they are.
- Defining who you want to target and what you want them to do is critical for success.
- When we began taking our marketing efforts to the next level we started by defining who we wanted to reach and what we wanted their action to be.
- Our first effort, was a partnership with South Dakota Tourism on a pheasant marketing campaign, ***Hunt the Greatest.***



Pheasant Marketing

In 2020, GFP partnered with South Dakota Tourism to launch a comprehensive pheasant marketing campaign.

- This campaign was focused on recruiting, retaining, and reactivating pheasant hunters in South Dakota.
- How did we do this?
 - Recruiting female license holders
 - 12% budget, 5,571 license transactions (21% trackable transactions)
 - Retaining traditionalists
 - 12% budget, 3,388 license transactions (13% trackable transactions)
 - Reactivating lapsed youth hunters
 - 5% budget, 5,025 license transactions (19% trackable transactions)
- Overall, the 2021 season saw an 11% increase in small game license sales in conjunction with our marketing campaign.



MAFWA Diversity Tool Kit

- In 2022, GFP was awarded the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) grant to implement a small game diversity tool kit.
- This was implemented as a sub-campaign of the ongoing Hunt the Greatest campaign.
- The goal of this sub-campaign is to further show the fields are open to everyone and recruit additional hunters to the field.



Fishing Marketing



- Following the success of the Hunt the Greatest campaign, GFP began a comprehensive effort to recruit, retain and reactivate anglers through a fishing campaign.
- Fishing South Dakota began in March 2022, it's priorities include:
 - Recruiting nonresident to South Dakota's destination fisheries.
 - Reactivating lapsed resident anglers by offering education resources and encouraging urban fishing opportunities.
 - Retaining anglers by sharing pictures of stories of trophy fish and highlighting fisheries across the state.



Fishing with Friends

In conjunction with Fishing South Dakota, GFP was awarded a grant through the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) to implement a comprehensive fishing education program.

- This program is taking place in Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Pierre with a full enrollment of 60 participants.
- Participants will take part in three classes including:
 - Basic fishing education and classroom experience.
 - Exposure to a local fishery and fish species.
 - Catch it, clean it, cook it capstone event at a local fishery.
- This program further increases the recruitment of new anglers into the sport of fishing.

Organizational Shift



An emphasis on recruitment, retention and reactivation and marketing with those strategies in mind requires a major shift in organizational mindset.



Organizational Impacts

- Successfully implementing customer service, innovative technology, marketing and R3 into your organization does not happen overnight.
- **Successful implementation includes:**
 - Strategic planning-what are the overall objectives?
 - Staff assessment-are the right people in the right place to meet these objectives?
 - Financial commitment-marketing requires money, but the ROI is where success is found.
 - The right staff in the right positions to move things forward.

Digital Content Strategist



- Position created in 2016 specifically to manage GFP's digital presence including:
 - Main GFP Website
 - Other Managed Websites (SDLeastWanted, Habitat Pays)
 - GFP's Social Media Pages
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
- This position has been held by three individuals since it's creation.
- After Nick's promotion this position was left vacant for a year, which during that time showed how critical it is to our department and what we do each day.

Takeaways



- Your customers wants, needs and desires will constantly change.
- As a collective organization, you must constantly be at the ready to evolve and meet customers where they are.
- Embrace next technologies, analyze the trends, hire the right people to move you to the next level.
- Foster and invest in the tools for your team and your customers to meet the emerging trends and customer desires.
- Communication is critical to everything, especially when it comes to change. Ensuring you have the necessary resources and tools in place prior to that is paramount to successfully navigating those changes.
- Recruit, retention and reactivation lies at the soul of everything we do.



SOUTH DAKOTA



Game, Fish
& Parks