

**Stafford Air and Space Museum: Secondary Research**

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### Background

The problem for the Stafford Air and Space Museum statement is the need to find younger audiences and to attract more customers. The situation involves finding ways to get the younger audiences to the museum as well as the communities surrounding Weatherford. By gaining more customers, the awareness of the museum will increase as well as the new potential and repeat customers. The museum wants to also explore new ways to communicate with costumes and channels to explore on social media (*Client Brief, 2020*).

Also, the situation involves finding new ways to explore the younger audiences and get them to the museum. The museum wants to take advantage of new opportunities to increase traffic and awareness of the museum (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020).

This situation is very important to the vision of the museum which involves:

The goals of the museum are to finish the renovations, double the attendance and gain attention/significance from the nation (*Client Brief, 2020*). The museum also wants to reach out to stakeholders and hear their input as well (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020).

This situation is very positive, because it is bringing light to the museum and only making the museum better. The museum is currently functioning decently, however if these changes are made only good things can come to the museum.

This situation can be resolved by taking the suggestions by our class and implementing them. The museum could also benefit from hiring a social media manager or brand manager. The

management team does not currently have that position filled. Filling that position would help their situation.

### **Internal**

The organization provides the service of entertainment/education of a space museum. There is historical information, exhibits and artifacts to show (Thomas P. Stafford: Stafford Air and Space Museum, n.d.). The museum provides the experience of these things.

Some benefits/advantages of the museum are the multiple exhibits, most collections of rocket engines in the world, full-scale replicas of aircrafts, actual space suits and space crafts on site (Thomas P. Stafford: Stafford Air and Space Museum, n.d.). Some problems/disadvantages of the museum are their less entertaining ways to layout the museum, the unfinished exhibits of the museum and a wasteful use of space for the exhibits and non-interactive museums (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020).

The speciality of this museum includes all the special artifacts, exhibits and historical information that no other museums have. The high ranking of the museum also is a specialty. The museum has the finest collection of artifacts in the central US (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020).

The organization has a steady budget. They have a board of directors and 2 full-time staff members. They also have volunteers that help the day to day business (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020). They have access to social media channels such as Facebook.

Thomas Stafford himself is still involved in the museum. They are also a Smithsonian affiliate. They have built an additional 20,000 sq ft space that will house 400 new exhibits. The

location of the museum is on Route 40 and Route 66 which is easy access to travelers (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020).

The organization does not have a communications director to better plan out social media posts or connect to local journalists. This in turn causes problems because their social media accounts are not updated on a daily or even weekly basis. The organization also has budgeting issues even though they have a steady budget, they use a majority of the budget on printing out brochures that barely reach out to the target audience (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020).

Staff of the museum can try to start utilizing social media and do simple posts such as discussing different exhibits or announce new ones. They need to rework the budget that is tailored to the target audience and not focus on just having brochures.

## **External**

Organizations that may hinder the Stafford Museum are other air and space museums in the state of Oklahoma. Their biggest “rival” includes the Tulsa Air and Space Museum & Planetarium (Tulsa Air and Space Museum & Planetarium, n.d.). However, with the distance between the two, it seems unlikely that these two will overlap in many ways.

The opposition may include conspiracy theorists, as well as people serving political agendas. The museum commented on a lack of school field trips, so this may be contributed to by the lack of funding to public schools. The client brief mentioned political agendas contributing to this, so it is something to be concerned about (*Information from client brief*). The museum noted that children and school trips are an important part of their business, so the fact that this is deteriorating is a notable point of interest that needs to be remedied.

One external Impediment for this organization is the way the public looks at museums like this. Air and space travel, up until recently, had become a thing of the past. Outside of air and space enthusiasts, going to a museum like this without any sort of special occasion was most likely not very high on many people's to-do lists. In addition, while being near the highway is important, they are a large enough distance away from Oklahoma City that it would be an inconvenience for returning customers from the OKC metro area to come regularly (*Information from client brief*).

One of the largest opportunities that the Stafford Museum has is their geographic location. Being right near I-40 and Route 66, the consistent flow of new customers is something that should be taken advantage of (Stafford Air and Space Museum, 2020). With better marketing, the museum could become a notable place to stop on these freeways for people to stop on a road trip.

## **Publics**

The customers for the Stafford Museum are mainly families, tourists, and travelers. Some who also might be interested are those within the age demographic of the Apollo launch because they are more likely to have an interest and enthusiasm for space.

The producers for the Stafford Museum are the volunteers, employees, interns, and board members.

The enablers are the media and opinion leaders. Enablers can also be those who visit the museum and share their experience either by social media or word of mouth. These outlets allow more exposure and raise awareness for the museum.

The limiters for the museum would be the competitors. For example the Sam Noble Museum in Norman and the Tulsa Air and Space Museum & Planetarium. These museums are relatively far from each other, but they all have potential to take customers from the Stafford Museum.

### **Narrow Down to Key Publics**

The key public for the Stafford Air and Space Museum are their customers. These customers are specifically families looking for an activity to do together, young adults with children and roadtrippers/travelers on vacation.

The people engaging with the museum's social media the most are mostly baby boomers. Local families could be a lot more aware of the museum's existence because it probably is not the first place they think of when choosing an activity. Most families are probably in the apathetic stage.

For families aware of the museum, they think it is a great option for a family-friendly activity.

Families most likely find information on the museum when they search for good activities to do together. Parents find other parents' opinions, either through social media or direct word of mouth, as a credible source. Parents these days mostly use facebook but instagram is popular for more "trendy" parents and is continuously increasing in popularity amongst all parents.

The primary demographic of the key public for the Stafford Air and Space Museum is young married couples from the age of 25-40 years old. They most likely live in the Oklahoma

City metro area, or they are traveling through the area on vacation. Most of these couples and their children are likely to live in suburb areas of larger cities in the United States. These out of town couples would probably live in the states closely surrounding Oklahoma in order for their road trip vacation to be drivable. These couples have typically graduated college and have an upper middle class socioeconomic status. Their political affiliation is likely to be republican, as the majority of Oklahomans and surrounding states have a large republican population. It is possible they also have some more modern, less conservative views because they are from a younger generation.

The key lifestyle traits of these young couples are hard workers that care about the well-being of their children. The growth, development and happiness of their children are their top priorities. These people enjoy traveling, educational experiences and spending time with their family. They are persuaded by a combination of facts and emotions. This is due to the fact they are educated and value logical information, however they appeal to the emotional perspective their children provide. Their motivation is likely to be rooted in the desire to provide opportunities for success for their children's futures.

### **Situation Analysis (Summary)**

The majority of the secondary research that we gathered came from our discussion with our client, the Stafford Air and Space Museum, and the information they provided us. Additionally, we examined the Museum's website and social media platforms to gain more understanding of the client, its publics, and the public relations problem facing the organization. Our client helped us define the problem, informing us that it wants to focus on building a better relationship with and establishing a strong public in individuals under 40 years old. This allowed

us to easily identify our key public for our strategic communication efforts as potential visitors under 40, or, in a narrower definition, millennials. The Museum hopes to better utilize social media channels to strengthen and increase communication to its key public. A research study conducted by Cao influenced this approach through evidence that supported the claim that millennials heavily seek out communication through social media rather than more traditional means organizations relied on for communication with earlier generations (Cao, 2010).

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Location: the Museum is next to I-40 which is travelled by over 28,000 vehicles per day.</p> <p>Smithsonian Affiliate: the Museum is the only Smithsonian Affiliate on the 540 miles stretch of I-40 between Oklahoma City and Albuquerque</p> <p>Trending topic: excitement about space exploration is rising again</p> <p>Facilities expansion: the Museum has new additions and hundreds of new exhibits</p> <p>Reputation: the Museum has positive perceptions from visitors and boasts a 5-star rating on TripAdvisor</p>	<p>Location: the Museum is an hour away from a major metropolitan area</p> <p>Appeal: most people alive today were born after the Apollo moon landings</p> <p>Public knowledge: although the Museum has been around for more than 25 years, it is not well known within Oklahoma, especially in the metropolitan areas of OKC and Tulsa</p> <p>Keeping public interest: the Museum has to sustain the promise of "something new and exciting"</p> <p>COVID-19: the Museum is unable to host a grand opening due to the pandemic.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Social Media: the Museum can increase public awareness and perception through the utilization of social media</p> <p>COVID-19: the Museum has the opportunity to bring in local visitors from the surrounding metropolitan areas and across the state because the pandemic hinders individuals desire to fly on planes, travel, stay in a hotel, etc.</p>	<p>COVID-19: the virus is more fatal among older individuals, the group that entails the majority of the Museum's visitors,</p>

The Stafford Air and Space Museum representatives provided us with sufficient information and research, which leads us to seek out only minimal additional research. Because the Museum itself has the most accurate information regarding visitor information and internal analysis, we considered this research accurate and reliable. We cited the previously mentioned research study by Cao that examined millennials use of social media as a communication channel



to support our assumption on this relationship. We also looked into other existing museums in Oklahoma to identify potential competitors.

## References

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