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An Integrated Marketing Communications Campaign for the Lincoln Saltdogs

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An Integrated Marketing Communications Campaign for the Lincoln Saltdogs April 29, 2014

Presented by Silver Lining Advertising Agency

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Silver Lining

The silver lining of a situation is the bright prospect. It's the fine line between optimism and success. No matter how big or how small the problem, one needs to find that silver lining.

Silver Lining Advertising Agency is made up of a group of six advertising students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The group formed in January of 2014 to develop an integrated marketing communications campaign for the Lincoln Saltdogs with the goal of increasing home game attendance at Haymarket Park.

Included within the plans book is a compilation of primary and secondary research, campaign goals and objectives, creative strategies and public relations tactics.

The recommended campaign presented within this book serves as a call to action to urge Lincoln residents to join the Saltdogs family. We believe we've found the silver lining that the Lincoln Saltdogs have been looking for.

Silver Lining Team Members

Nicole Bormann Annie Pigaga Michaela Ostronic Shelby Hinze Miranda Milovich Kayla Van Wie Account Executive Project Manager Research Director Public Relations Director Creative Director Creative Director

Executive Summary

Campaign Challenge

To develop a campaign focused on increasing attendance at Saltdogs games while promoting an affordable and engaging form of entertainment for the Lincoln community.

Target Audiences

The campaign's primary target markets are adults living in Lincoln with at least one child, possibly more, living at home.

Budget

The campaign's budget is \$50,000.

Objectives

The objectives of the campaign are to increase attendance at home Saltdogs games and to promote the Saltdogs in the Lincoln community.

Creative Strategy

The creative strategy for the campaign revolves around the theme, "Join the pack. Pack the park. Creative elements include print, outdoor, radio and a social media video.

Public Relations

Public relations tactics for the campaign include social media, promotional events, and media kits meant to encourage fans to pack the park.

Media

The campaign weighs heavily on print, radio and outdoor media along with a social media video that is anticipated to go viral.

Situation Analysis

Overview of the Lincoln Saltdogs

The Lincoln Saltdogs are a professional baseball team and part of the Central Division of the American Association of Independent Professional Baseball. The league consists of 16 teams divided into four divisions: North, Central, South and Can-Am (recently added). The American Association is not affiliated with Major League Baseball.

The Saltdogs were formed when the Madison Black Wolf was sold and moved to Lincoln at the conclusion of the 2000 season. Until 2005, the Saltdogs were a part of the Northern division. The next season, the Saltdogs and three other teams left to form the American Association. In 2009, they claimed their first league title by winning the American Association championship. The Saltdogs are currently owned by Jim Abel and managed by Ken Oberkfell.

During its formation, the organization wanted a name that tied into the history of Lincoln while still being family-friendly and fun. The term "saltdog" refers to settlers coming through Lincoln and using salt creeks to replenish their salt rations. It is also a play on the "dog days of summer." The Saltdogs have been playing at Haymarket Park since their beginning in 2001. For a dozen years, Haymarket Park has been named the "Best Playing Field" in Northern League/American Association; and two times the College Baseball "Field of the Year" by STMA. In the early years, the Saltdogs averaged more than 5,000 fans per game. Recently, the averages have dropped to 3,300-3,500 per game. The ballpark has a capacity of 8,500, with 4,500 spots in chairs and around 4,000 seats on the outfield berms. Homer, the Haymarket Hound, has been the mascot since the team was founded. The Saltdogs have had many different slogans and themes during their 14-year tenure, but since 2005, they have been using "It's Fun and Games" as a way to encompass everything they do.

During the client briefing with Bret Beer in late January, 2014, he said that the main goal for the Saltdogs is to increase attendance, or in the ballpark vernacular, to increase the number of "butts in seats." Recently, the attendance has been dropping because, perhaps, as Beer explained, the "newness" of the brand has worn off. For our campaign to be successful, we will develop an integrated campaign with media and messages aimed at maintaining and increasing awareness and that ever-important attendance at Saltdogs baseball games.

It was important for Silver Lining to learn as much about the client, audiences, trends with teams like the Saltdogs, baseball games in general, and park events. The very first step in any IMC plan is research. The following section outlines our research efforts, both secondary and primary and the key findings. This information serves as the foundation for many of our recommended strategies and tactics.

Research Objectives | What We Need to Know

- Learn about previous promotions by the Lincoln Saltdogs
- The primary, secondary and tertiary audiences

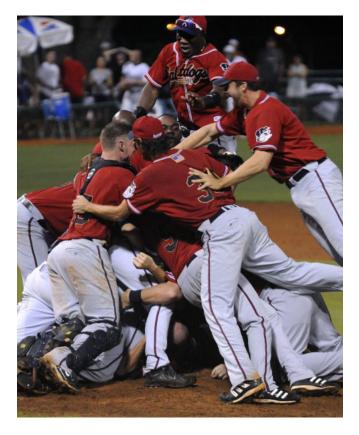
Research

- Where people look for Saltdogs info
- Why people attend baseball games vs. other activities
- What else do they do for entertainment?
- Who is the family decision maker when it comes to entertainment?
- Are promotions, special events, etc. important for those decisions?
- What they like best about Saltdogs games
- What are the demographics, psychographics, and habits of the audience?
- What is the level of awareness of the Lincoln Saltdogs among the audiences?
- Who are the Saltdogs? What are their key features/benefits?
- Trends in interleague attendance
- Direct and indirect competition
- What media/social media do audiences utilize?
- What are other similar programs doing with social media?
- What are other similar programs doing with mobile media?
- What are the most effective media outlets for audiences?

Secondary Research

Methodology

Our goal through secondary research is to compile existing information and dig deeper into information and trends for independent baseball leagues around the country. We looked at a variety of sources, most of which were online. We wanted to learn what compels the target audiences to attend a game in a league that isn't as big and popular as Major League Baseball, plus other information stated in our objectives.



Key Findings

- Baseball is an American tradition and an enjoyable pastime exclusively in the sunny summer months.
- Baseball games are interactive activities; they are friendly and family-oriented, providing wholesome fun for all ages.
- Haymarket Park is a nearly 30 million dollar complex, home to the Lincoln Saltdogs (2001) and the Nebraska Cornhuskers (2002).
- As an independent professional team, the Saltdogs produce talented players and high rate major league call-ups.
- Saltdogs games take place on various days of the week, depending on their schedule.
- A Saltdogs ticket for seating on the berms is \$6.25, ranking below the national average.
- Since 2008, attendance has not exceeded 4,000 inside an 8,500 capacity ballpark.
- Men vs. women attendance ratio remains at a consistent 50/50 cross-section.
- A typical Lincoln family size is three persons, including a husband, wife and child.
- College promotion nights, thus far, have not drawn a significant crowd.
- The Saltdogs have used (much as trade-out) radio, print, Internet and social media outlets to promote their team and events.

Key Insights

- August ticket sales have a tendency to be lower due to children's participation in back-to-school activities.
- Discounted food and beverages, as well as giveaways, are popular incentives for Saltdogs fans.
- Saltdogs sponsored concerts and live performances at the park are well-liked entertainment options.
- Hosting runs, such as the Glow Run or Beerfest, create positive interaction with the Lincoln community.
- The Saltdogs reach diverse audience types with their variety of promotions: Bark in the Park, LPS Day, Community Nights, Summer Reading Program or Boy/Girl Scout Camp Out at the Ballpark.
- Firework displays are a fan favorite.
- Families often attend Saltdogs games over the weekend, Fridays or Saturdays in particular.
- Pleasant weather is an inevitable deciding factor for Saltdogs ticket purchase.

Competition

Primary Competition

- College World Series
- Omaha Storm Chasers
- Youth Little League baseball
- Youth Little League softball
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln baseball
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln softball

Secondary Competition

- Movie theaters
- Restaurants
- Bowling alleys
- Lincoln bars
- Pinnacle Bank Arena
- Local concerts
- Children's museums
- Lincoln Children's Zoo
- Swimming pools
- Miniature golf
- Swimming and diving competitions
- Lincoln Parks & Recreation
- Summer camps



Join the pack. Pack the park.

Primary Research

Methodology

We created an in-depth quantitative instrument: a 23 question survey was sent to the Saltdogs email subscription list with about a 6% response of more than 600.

Key Findings

- More than 80% of survey participants have been to a Saltdogs game in the past two years.
- A large portion of the respondents are married, male, and have at least one child.
- Other than a Saltdogs game, more than 50% of the respondents go to Haymarket Park for Husker baseball games.
- Thirsty Thursday is the most popular promotional day with \$1 Busch Light cans and \$1 Pepsi drinks followed by Sunday Fundays.
- Those who like Haymarket Park activities prefer to engage in outdoor activities.
- The preferred method for finding out the Saltdogs schedule and promotions is email, followed by the Saltdogs "Pocket Schedule."
- Facebook is the most popular form of social media and is mostly used for getting information, sharing information and interacting.
- Two other popular forms of social media among Saltdogs fans are Twitter and You-Tube.

Key Insights

- The results of the survey indicate that there is still a steady fan base.
- Haymarket Park is primarily associated with baseball and individuals are most attracted to baseball events there.
- Promotional days that offer discounts on items that appeal to older males and females are more effective in capturing the interest of potential game attendees.
- Traditional media is still a popular medium for the target demographic.
- The Saltdogs data suggests that their games appeal a bit more to males than females.
- Individuals are looking for more adult-themed promotional events at Saltdogs games.
- Discounts on food and drink as well as inexpensive transportation to games are appealing.

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SWOT Analysis

- The Saltdogs play at the award winning, state-of-the-art Haymarket Park.
- Haymarket Park is connected to Lincoln's downtown area, allowing for easy access to shops, bars and restaurants.
- Games are family friendly and offer activities for kids to get in on the action and for ()adults to relax.
 - Theme nights offer a wide variety of entertainment for attendees.
 - With ticket prices ranging from \$6.25 (berm seating) to \$16.25 (club seating) per game, it is an inexpensive alternative to other family activities.
 - Families are able to enjoy the outdoor weather.

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- The Saltdogs are big on community involvement and host community nights for surrounding towns, as well as promotions for kids and their families.
- Saltdogs games allow parents to share a classic American tradition with their children.
- Going to a Saltdogs game provides more family interaction than sitting in a movie theater or sending the kids off to day camp.
- The Kids Club allows kids to feel like they are an important part of the game.
- According to Bret Beer, the Saltdogs have had a consistent flow of fans since their debut in Lincoln.
- Veaknesses Saltdogs games are not necessarily as exciting to watch as major league baseball games.
 - Good players may leave as soon as they get good enough to join a better team.
 - The Saltdogs games aren't very appealing to younger crowds, such as college students, because it is more of a family oriented environment.
 - The Saltdogs lack social media buzz, partly because their Facebook page has a few kinks and they don't have much of a Twitter following.
 - Competition from other sports teams drives potential fans away from the Saltdogs games.
 - Hot, humid weather and rain may cause families to stay in rather than go out to the ballpark.

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SWOT Analysis

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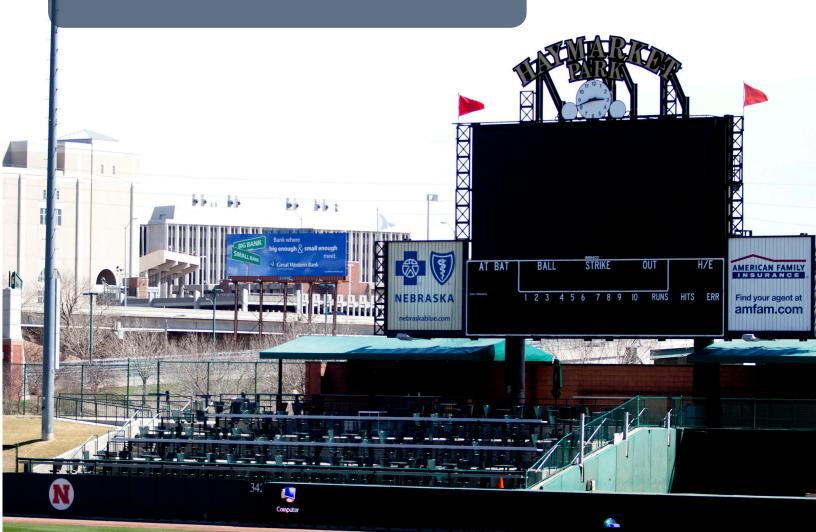
- Increased social media posting could drive more people to the pages and make them want to go to a game.
- Technology could allow for a mobile app directly related to the Saltdogs and their schedule and promotions.
- A possible partnership with bars, restaurants, and the Pinnacle Bank Arena could increase the "cool factor" of going to a Saltdogs game as well as community awareness of the team.
- An increase in community relations events could increase player relationships/ recognition.
- The Saltdogs already have a solid foundation of fans that can be built upon.
- Haymarket Park is one of the most elite non-MLB ballparks in the country, but people overlook it as an entertainment option.

- Other teams such as the Huskers and the Storm Chasers, and events such as the College World Series are other games that compete with Saltdogs games.
- Children's extracurricular activities, such as sports practice or summer camps, could conflict with game times.
- Other activities such as camping, vacationing, movies, etc. are other summer pastimes could compete for family "outdoor" time.
- The Saltdogs games don't happen in any particular order or on specific days of the week so it is hard for fans to keep track of when they can go to games.
- It's difficult for working parents to attend weekday games.
- Fans might not necessarily care about the players or if the Saltdogs win.
- Summer storms may affect the games' attendance.

Join the pack. Pack the park.



Campaign



Target Audiences

Demographic Profile

- 30-50 years of age
- Male and female
- Living in Lincoln or surrounding area
- Married, or previously married
- Having at least 1 child, possibly more currently living at home

Ways in which families get their information:

- Internet
- Television
- Radio
- Print
- Social Media
- Word of Mouth

How families spend their free time:

- Going to the movies
- Watching television
- Listening to the radio
- Attending athletic games
- Attending concerts and performances
- Attending school functions
- Going to the mall

Psychographic Profile

Jennifer is a 34-year-old woman who is married to husband, Brian, and lives with him and their two children, Preston and Olivia, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jennifer and Brian work full-time, but keep weekends and parts of the summer available to spend with their children. They enjoy inexpensive activities that all of the family will enjoy. It is important to Jennifer that their children spend time outdoors instead of indoors with video games or the Internet, as well as spending time together as a family. Jennifer and Brian look for activities that would engage the entire family, especially in the summer when their children are out of school.

Primary types of social media used by family members:

- Twitter
- YouTube
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

Other Key Audience Insights

- Parents prefer to engage in activities with their children.
- Families with younger children prefer to engage in recreational activities that are familiar to them and that do not require much planning.
- Families with older children prefer to engage in adventurous activities.

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Marketing Goals and Objectives

Goal: To increase Saltdogs' initial ticket sales rates to approximately 5,000 tickets per game.

Objective: To have an effect on action, specifically to increase attendance, at the home Saltdogs games by 5-10% by the end of the first year of the promotional campaign; estimated increase of 350 per game and 9,000-12,000 in a season.

Advertising Goals

- To raise awareness of the Saltdogs baseball team among Lincoln adults ages 30-50.
- To promote Saltdogs baseball games as an affordable and engaging form of entertainment for individuals and families.
- To increase the Saltdogs' fan base by promoting family fun and outdoor components.

Positioning Statement

For people in Lincoln who enjoy athletics, the outdoors and affordable family entertainment, the Lincoln Saltdogs baseball team and Haymarket Park offer one of the only opportunities for them to enjoy athletics, entertainment and the outdoors in an affordable and family-friendly venue.

Budget

Because of the many trade-out agreements (about \$200k) the Saltdogs have with local media outlets, the suggested budget for this campaign will not exceed \$50,000.

Join the pack. Pack the park.



The "Join the pack. Pack the park" campaign will utilize print, outdoor, video, radio advertisements and other promotional efforts in order to effectively engage the target audience.

The terms "earned, owned and paid (aka bought) media" have become very popular in the interactive marketing space today. In fact, taken together they can be applied as a simple way for interactive marketers to categorize and ultimately prioritize all of the media options they have.

	Definition	Examples	Role
Owned	The channel a brand controls	Websites, mobile sites, social media	To build for longer-term rela- tionships with existing poten- tial customers and earn media
Paid	The brand pays to leverage a channel	Display ads, paid search, sponsor- ships	To shift from foundation to a catalyst that feeds owned and creates earned media
Earned	When customers become the channel	Word of mouth, buzz and viral mar- keting	To listen and respond- earned media is often the result of well-executed and well-coordi- nated owned and paid media

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Owned Media

The Saltdogs current owned media consists of:

- A website
- Social media
- Local cable television ads
- Radio ads
- Pocket schedule listing games and promotions

For our campaign, we only plan on expanding heavily on a few of these areas and not changing anything entirely. The organization currently has very solid tactics, however, our media is what we believe will allow us to execute our campaign and reach our goals as effectively as possible.

Join the pack. Pack the park.

Public Relations

Goals & Objectives

Goal: Enhance the relationship between the Saltdogs and the Lincoln community

Objective: To educate the community on the value of the Saltdogs organization to the Lincoln community

Tactic: Fanny pack promotional kit Tactic: Community spotlight on Facebook Tactic: Announce facts at the game

Objective: To create a buzz and increase community interaction

 Tactic: Facebook community spotlight.... "who's packing the park?" Facebook player spotlight.... "Pack Leader of the Week" Facebook fan spotlight... "Pack member of the week"
 Tactic: Twitter FAQ/Did you know?
 Tactic: Instagram challenge using #SaltdogSelfie

Objective: To develop a better relationship with the community by getting involved in outreach programs

Tactic: Promote non-profit partnership through social media "Who's packing the park"
Tactic: "Pack the Track" 5k run benefitting a non-profit organization
Tactic: Homer at different community events such as the library's summer reading program



Owned, Paid and Earned



Creative Brief

Campaign Theme Join the pack. Pack the park.

The Lincoln Saltdogs offer a fun and exciting experience for families with promotions, theme nights and children's activities. The Saltdogs add a lot to the community. There isn't anything else like them in Lincoln. The integrated campaign for the Lincoln Saltdogs will focus on the idea of packing the park, or in other words, putting as many butts in seats as possible. To accomplish this, we have developed a fun theme for the campaign: "Join the pack. Pack the park."

The focus is on engaging individuals of all ages, particularly those within the designated target market, and will provide the audience with a sense of community. Joining the pack allows for a sense of belonging, and the motto acts as a call to action.

Campaign Personality

The campaign is family-friendly, fun, engaging and light-hearted. Adults will be attracted to the clever advertisements, while children will be attracted to the comical manner in which the ads are presented.

Tonality

Humorous, silly, fun, enticing, beckoning

Opportunity

Saltdogs games are a fun and inexpensive alternative to other summer activities. Lincoln is lucky to have something like the Saltdogs; not all cities of similar size do. It's time to bring Lincoln together for Saltdogs games. We want people to see what they are missing and take advantage of having something as great as the Saltdogs right in their backyard.

Why We are Advertising

To create fresh incentive for people in Lincoln and the surrounding areas to attend to Saltdogs games as well as to widen the Saltdogs' fan base.

Our Proposition Is:

Join the Pack. Pack the Park.

And they will believe it because

Who doesn't want to part of something big? A pack isn't just like a family; it is a family. Families offer support for each other, much like the Saltdogs support the Lincoln community. The Saltdogs are an asset to Lincoln and are part of the reason why Lincoln is such a rich city. If people understand this, they will be more likely to want to join the pack. In being a member of the pack, they will feel appreciated, involved and valued.



Join the pack. Pack the park. Sources





Print – Lincoln Journal–Star Newspaper

The following ads are a series of print ads that will rotate throughout the Lincoln Journal Star in the Sunday paper. Three ads will be placed in April, and two will be placed in the months of May, June and July.



Join the pack. Pack the park.















Rotary Billboard Advertisement

The billboard is going to be placed in different locations around downtown Lincoln during the months of April, May, June and July.



Join the pack. Pack the park.

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Radio 30-second spot

We recommend using the Silver Lining campaign theme of Join the Pack. Pack the Park radio that will be played on stations included in Lincoln Saltdogs trade agreements on weekdays during the times of 6:00-7:00 AM and 3:00-4:00 PM.

There are 8,500 seats in Haymarket Park. That's 8,500 places for you and your family to park your keisters and catch a Saltdogs game on a warm summer night. Whether it's hanging out with Homer before the game, sitting with your family on the berms, or sipping an ice cold drink while the sun goes down, there's something for everyone. So get your hiney over here, support our Saltdogs, and find out what it's like to be a part of the pack.

Join the pack. Pack the park. The Lincoln Saltdogs.

Join the pack. Pack the park.



Promotional Brochure

The promotional brochure shown below will be distributed at the first home game of the season as well as at the Party with Your Pack tailgate. These brochures will also be included in the promotional kit that is handed out to the media.

Side 1:



Side 2:



Join the pack. Pack the park.

Earned | Owned Media

Facebook

Who's Packing the Park?

Prior to a game, the Facebook account will highlight any group planning to attend the game. Individuals wishing for their group to be recognized can message the Facebook account in advance.

University of Nebraska Lincoln employees and their families are "Packing the Park at tonight's game against Sioux Falls Canaries. Join them in packing the park tonight!



Join the pack. Pack the park.

Earned | Owned Media



Facebook

Pack Leader of the Week

Each week, one Saltdogs player will be selected as "Pack Leader of the Week" for their outstanding performance in a game the previous week. A photo and short bio will accompany a professional photo of the player.

Congrats to our "Pack Leader of the Week", Bryan Warner. Warner led the pack to victory over the Sioux Falls Canaries! Like this photo to show Howard your support!

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Earned | Owned Media

Facebook

Pack Member of the Week

Each week, one social media follower will be selected as "Pack Member of the Week." The individual chosen for their interaction with the Saltdogs' Facebook account will be personally messaged in advance about being promoted on the site. Additionally, the chosen individual will be asked for a short bio to be included in the posting.

Jimmy Evans, a 6-year-old from Lincoln, is our "Pack Member" of the week! He is ready to play ball!



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Join the Fanny Pack Frenzy

Below is a photo of the fanny pack for a promotional giveaway we recommend as part of the in campaign. Included in it will be a 'protect your pack' sunscreen, a small container of 'pack' peanuts and a promotional brochure. This will be a giveaway at our "Bring Your Pack Day" and will be the main theme of Friday Fanny Frenzy promotion. The goal of this fun giveaway is to provide fans with a great way to remember the Saltdgogs and also as a tie-in to future events and contests at Haymarket Park.



Join the pack. Pack the park.



Instagram

Saltdog Pack the Park Selfie Challenge

Individuals can submit their selfie photo showing their support for the Saltdogs in some way before the start of every home game. One select photo will be presented on the big screen each game. In order to participate in this challenge, individuals must accompany their Instagram photo with #SaltdogsSelfie.

Promotional Events

"Tail" Gate: Party with the Pack

To kick of the season, the Lincoln Saltdogs will host a "Tail" Gate two and a half hours before the first game. For the first thirty minutes, Saltdogs pack leaders will attend to sign autographs and take pictures with pack members. Other attractions include a pitching contest, appearance by Homer, radio hosts, and special concessions deals. Fanny packs will be given out to the first 500 fans.

Bring Your Fanny Pack

Promotion will be held at three of the Saltdog home games during the season. Fans will be asked to bring their special Join the Fanny Packs to the ball park for a chance to win a VIP photo/autograph session with the team. In order to register a pack for the winning, members are asked to check in their pack 30 to 60 minutes before the game and wear coordinating outfits. The largest group present will win.

Join the Fanny Pack Frenzy

At select home games, five fanny packs with the Saltdogs logo will be handed out to fan. Seat numbers will be selected and those sitting in the seats will win. Additionally, fans have the option of purchasing one of these Fanny packs full of concession coupons, peanuts and other small trinkets at park stands at any game.

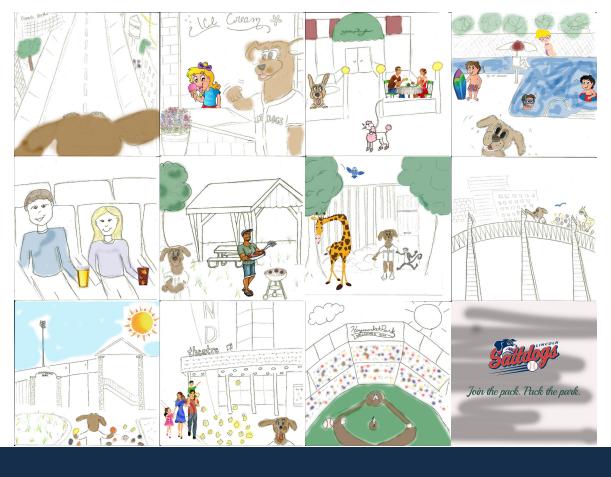
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Earned Media

YouTube Video

We wanted to create a social media video for the Saltdogs that emphasizes our campaign theme and will eventually go viral. The video follows Homer the Haymarket Hound, the Saltdogs mascot, around Lincoln as he gets our target audience to get behind him and the Saltdogs by joining the pack. Children will be shown engaging in activities that are considered to be the Saltdogs' main competition such as going to the pool, seeing a movie and going to the park. The children will see Homer, drop what they're doing and follow him to Haymarket Park. This video is a fun and engaging way to explain our campaign theme and show our target that joining the pack and attending Saltdogs games is the better option for a summer activity. The video will be posted to YouTube and will use our other social media channels to help allow it to go viral.

Join the Pack. Pack the Park with Homer video:



Budget Estimates

Owned

Earned

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Bring Your Pack Day

- Lincoln Saltdogs Website
- Social Media
- YouTube
- Pocket Schedule
- Radio

Paid

Print (9 full color insertions 4 x 6" \$1,978/ ad)	\$17,800
Radio	Trade Outs
Outdoor (Rotary for four months)	\$11,520
Social Media Video	\$1,000
Party with the Pack Tailgate Event	\$600
Promotional Kit (Stuffed fanny pack for media)	\$1,400
Fanny Packs (At tailgate, games and sold in apparel store)	\$11,500
Informational Brochure	\$1,100
Contingency	\$4,000
Total	\$48,920

Evaluation

The primary evaluation method for our campaign will be determining if the attendance and ticket sales for Saltdogs games increases or decreases. Ultimately, our goal is putting "butts in seats" and evaluation of this is key. We can also measure our success by the amount of follows the social media pages accumulate between the beginning and end of our campaign, increases in e-mail sign-up, web hits and other available online analytics. We will evaluate our campaign throughout the Saltdogs' season and also determine how the numbers compare from the end of the season to the beginning.

Join the pack. Pack the park.

Thank you

A special thank you to the following individuals and groups, without which, the development of this integrated campaign would not be possible:

Lincoln Saltdogs Jim Abel Charlie Meyer Adam Burmood Bret Beer Anne Duchek Stacy James Ethan Rowley Matt Hartman Rich Bailey

Join the pack. Pack the park.



Nicole Bormann



Annie Pigaga



Michaela Ostronic



Shelby Hinze



Miranda Milovich



Kayla Van Wie

