

Strategic Plan Outline

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Preface

For this assignment I chose a business for which I worked before. The name of this business is: Toluca Ranch Haunted House. This business is incredibly special to me and so unique to everyone who is familiar with it. The reason for this is because Toluca Ranch is not an actual business at all; this is a year-round fundraiser hosted by a Non-Profit Organization called RGV Helping Hands. RGV (Rio Grande Valley) Helping Hands is a non-profit organization that operates in South Texas, all along the Rio Grande Valley. The Rio Grande Valley comprises the border along Mexico and the cities of McAllen, Edinburg, Weslaco, among others. This non-profit organization helps people in need in plenty of different ways including but not limited to rebuilding houses. Some additional examples of what they have done in the past is help disadvantaged people when natural disasters have occurred along the Rio Grande Valley as well as helping with food banks, fundraisers, and taking part in school or community activities (<https://www.facebook.com/rgvhelpinghands>). This non-profit organization has been around for about six years. Their website states that it was founded on 2014 by two community members who wanted to help the cities nested around the Rio Grande Valley; their fundraiser is the main means of revenue for the Non- Profit organization (<http://rgvhelpinghands.com/>). Finally, the location for this fundraiser was donated by a local family that did so in order to support the Non-Profit. It was actually one of the family member's idea to start the haunted attraction in the first place (<http://tolucaranch.com>).

1. Executive Summary

Toluca Ranch Haunted House is located in southern Texas along the Rio Grande Valley. This is one of the largest haunted attraction in the area and it runs 100% on volunteers. There are

aggressive pre-approval procedures in place that include background checks for volunteers. Per their Non-Profit website (<http://rgvhelpinghands.com/>), a phone interview (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 25, 2020), and the information on the website <http://tolucaranch.com>, Toluca Ranch has implemented different programs and opportunities for the community to become volunteers in the organization resulting in having a current volunteer waiting list of anywhere between 100-200 every fiscal year. The attraction is located about ten miles from the nearest city; in addition, this attraction is one of the few in the country that has a ‘touch policy’ This ‘touch policy’ means that the volunteers/ actors can touch the customers but have to follow certain guidelines to do so; the customers in turn, have to sign a waiver in order to experience most of the attraction (<http://tolucaranch.com>).

Regarding the period of time for this project, I decided to focus on a three-year long plan.

2. Business/Organization Name

As I stated before, the name of the business is Toluca Ranch Haunted House, and it is a business/ fundraiser that I hold close to my heart just for the fact that they do something fun and exciting while raising funds to help people. The way I see it, you can have so much fun while making a difference in the community. Some of the key information that I created for them follows.

- Mission: Working collaboratively, we will use our innovative resources and services to provide profitable fun, safe, memorable, and thrilling experiences to every single one of our customers.

- Vision: We want to be one of the state's top leading haunted attractions providing quality-based entertainment for all every day
- Values: Scare with care, there is no "I" in scare, & Make nightmares come true with safety, respect and control in mind.

The business is led by four board members: President/ Event Director, Vice President/ Manager of Operations, Treasurer/ Box Office Manager and Secretary/ Volunteer Manager; they strive to work collaboratively using their wide array of resources to give their customers the most memorable and exciting of experiences while pursuing their goals (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 25, 2020).

3. Research

The clients/ customers reside mainly in the state of Texas. Customers come from all over Texas, especially from the Rio Grande Valley and from the Mexican neighboring cities(<http://tolucaranch.com>). The clients are mainly horror aficionados and Halloween enthusiasts. There are also a high influx of High School/ College age students attending and a good number of families (especially over the Halloween month).

- Environmental scan: there are 7-10 different haunted attractions in the area directly competing with this haunted attraction. The attraction enjoys of a high level of popularity due to being unique since it is located in a ranch 'in the middle of nowhere' and is said to be located on an actual haunted location per urban legends and folklore. Many other attractions have started moving into permanent locations that are said to be haunted or

were part of scenes from heavily publicized movie settings. Finally, I have faith that the content and core values of this attraction are translated in such a way that the customers will keep going back as long as the attraction keeps providing high-class content for customers to enjoy.

4. Products and Services

The business deals with selling tickets to a haunted attraction; customers come in to get scared. The attraction works all year long but obviously during the Fall season and on certain holidays, the attraction seems to be in full bloom. There are different types of tickets. \$15 general admission ticket & \$25 VIP 'cut the line' ticket. There are also special guided small group tours of the attractions that run for \$20 when you buy 10 or more. Under this plan, tickets are expected to increase by \$2-5 every year.

5. Measurable Goals

This current fiscal year, the attraction made no revenue because it was closed due to the COVID restrictions. The last fiscal year on record brought in \$180,000 in profits alone.

With this information, I decided to concentrate on my strategic plan. Within the first year (December 2021), there should be \$150,000 in revenue. By September of 2021, there should be a profit of at least \$50,000, by end of October 2021, there should be \$125,000 & by end of December 2021, there should be \$150,000.

By the end of 2022, there should be a revenue of \$250,000. By September of this year, there should be a checkpoint of at least \$100,000, by end of October, there should be \$225,000 & by end of December, there should be \$250,000.

By the end of 2023, there should be a revenue of \$400,000. By September of this year, there should be a checkpoint of at least \$125,000, by end of October, there should be \$300,000 & by end of December, there should be \$400,000.

6. SWOT Analysis

- Strengths:
 - We have competitive prices \$15-20 that offer more value than similar attractions.
 - The attraction takes around 30-45 minutes to complete (more than the average).
 - The attraction has a unique location in an actual ranch.
- Weaknesses:
 - Needs better structures with waivers regarding admissions to avoid legal issues.
 - Needs some transportation for customers who may not have cars (as other attractions do) or who may find the attraction to be too far away.
 - Social media/ website- digital presence lacking.
- Opportunities:
 - Tourism has increased steadily for the last couple of years in the RGV area; businesses are willing to cross- promote if presented with the right proposal.
 - The city is offering grants to businesses/ Non-profit organizations that engage the community and schools.

- Haunted Attractions generate anywhere between \$ 300-500 million per year/ nationally so there is always room to improve and increase revenue and even to open a second location in the same area or create a new ‘scare area’ in the same ranch.
- Threats:
 - Local haunted attractions competing for same audience.
 - High insurance costs that are difficult to cover throughout operating seasons.
 - Lawsuits over the format of the haunted attraction.

7. Action Plan

My action plan for this business/ fundraiser would include the following:

- We will cross-promote with other local businesses. We will seek a partnership with local haunted houses to create ‘combo tickets’ through which customers will attend several attractions. We will then divide earnings from those tickets based on the attractions involved.
- We will develop an interdependent relationship with local school districts so that we can provide community hours for their students, incentives for their teachers in the form of free tickets and other opportunities for them to participate. In turn, we will attend and promote our attraction in pep rallies and have the district promote our attraction at no cost.
- We will designate a Social Media Manager to make sure our social media and websites are efficient and popular. We will host raffles and

promotions with tickets and with other partner businesses on social media platforms to engage our customers. In addition, we will partner with a marketing firm that will benefit by supporting a Non-Profit organization.

- We will cross-promote with local restaurants and hotels to promote tourism in the area in exchange for free promotion.
- We will attend local festivals, charities, fundraisers, and other events in order to promote our attraction; we will also give out interviews to local stations and online forums dedicated to the horror community.
- We will make sure our attraction is part of the ‘yearly scariest attractions’ on several websites and national horror community online magazines. This will be achieved by inviting horror community ‘celebrities’ to our events and providing them with free tickets and packets (including hotel and other attractions). This will be conducted with our partnership with the other businesses and hotels since having these horror ‘celebrities’ in town and perhaps staying in their hotels or attending events in their businesses, will drive up sales for them too. By engaging in horror community forums. We will engage with the audience to make sure that they support us as well.
- We will attend different haunting conventions to promote our attraction as well as comic conventions in the state of Texas.
- We will eventually reach out to different states such as Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Arizona. We will seek opportunities with the local government to promote tourism in the area and create ‘combo’ tickets with

other attractions such as the beach boardwalk and others in order to increase tourist interest in the region. Hotels will be part of this part of our marketing efforts as well.

- We will also make an effort to reach a wider audience by having ‘Family Nights.’
- Finally, there are several ways through which we could open a second or even third location. I would start by expanding the attraction and then adding a different haunted attraction nearby. There is another ranch nearby that I am sure we can persuade the owners to help us with. We could host another attraction there; we do have the volunteers waiting on waiting lists, so it is feasible to start a second attraction. I am sure we can donations for the start up too.

8. Communication Plan

My plan would include to communicate our goal to the team and have them collaborate with us on strategies and ideas on how to achieve that goal. My goal would be to have them take ownership of the ideas too by having them interact with me and give us insights on what they think could work and why. I would seek not only their insight but their rationale as well. These meetings would preferably be every week or bi-weekly to the most. The team consists of about 50 people. We will also offer incentive and bonuses for the employees/ volunteers who help us achieve that goal. In addition, we will create digital newsletters that communicate our progress.

9. Reviews and Updating

We will meet as a team once a month to discuss the progress of our strategic plan. We will set benchmarks towards the amounts we should have reached every year/ month/ week. Secretary and Treasurer will oversee these meetings to disseminate information regarding our progress.

References

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