

Situational Analysis

At the Des Moines Radio Group, I believe the central issue we are facing is a lack of communication to potential clients and current listeners. We could be doing more to get the message across to potential clients that our advertising services are the highest quality in the market, at the best price. For our listeners, as well as community members in Des Moines, we could be doing a better job of communicating our brand as the Des Moines Radio Group: who we are, what we do, and how we serve the community. Our key publics to focus on are radio listeners in the Des Moines/ Central Iowa area, citizens of Des Moines/ Central Iowa, and small business owners in Des Moines/ Central Iowa.

We are still dealing with the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, and though it seems the end is near, it is not behind us yet (Rogers, L. S., Johns Hopkins, *Where We Are in the Pandemic*). As we have seen throughout the Pandemic, this has affected a wide variety of industries and caused an increased number of shortages. Some examples that come to mind that could affect the Des Moines Radio Group would be outbreaks within the organizations that could take out talent and staff, shortages of materials we may need for promotional items we may want to manufacture. Looking at our advertising clients—if they are facing shortages of staff or product, advertising may not be high on their priority list. This is an important factor to keep in mind because of the all-encompassing, never-ending number of variables the Pandemic has influenced and will likely continue to influence, making for a potential loss of control. Though it sounds daunting, the likelihood is that the challenges that could present themselves are typically

minor in magnitude and treatable with flexibility and substitutions. So long as we keep the possibility in our foresight and remain diligently aware.

Another situation on the horizon is the fact that across the United States, less and less people are tuning into the radio (Pews, *Audio and podcasting fact sheet*.) This is another influence on our campaign that is out of our control. Despite this, there is still an audience for radio. One thing we could do to combat this, would be to get strategic with our contests and advertise them more on social. The Des Moines Radio Group's station do a pretty good job of this already, but this would give potential listeners more incentive to tune in. Another idea to help access potential listeners would be to encourage winners of ticket giveaways to post photos of the event on socials and to tag us or invite them to send us photos of the event that we could share. By sharing the photos from the events and attaching it with our name, we would be associating ourselves with the prizes we distribute, giving people who aren't fans of radio another reason to pay attention to us. I think we would also benefit from making an Instagram account for the Des Moines Radio Group itself. Although each of the stations have one, the group does not—I think this could help us solidify the brand and make it more visible while being a method of communicating all we do for the community.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has found that since the pandemic, consumers are increasingly opting for smaller, local businesses (Erdly, C. *Four trends that will shape retail in 2021*). This is relevant to us because since our clients are mostly small business owners, if they see an uptick in profits, they may choose to invest some of those profits in advertising. This trend towards supporting local and shopping small would be a good trend to lean into. Through communicating the message that we are big advocates for local business, we become a more appealing option than our competitors for local businesses looking to advertise. We could begin

a series on our Instagram and Facebook, highlighting some of our favorite local businesses a couple times a month. Whether we had hosts take turns sharing their favorites, just highlighted our client's businesses, or started a series where we had hosts try out and review different People's Choice Winners each week, we would be strengthening our association with local businesses. Depending on how much time we were willing to invest in this idea, it could even be made into a video series, potentially. It would also be an opportunity to reach a broader audience, especially if the businesses shared the posts to their followers.

Across the nation, the cost of living is increasing, and gas prices are sky rocketing (Amadeo, K, *U.S. Economic Outlook for 2022 and beyond*). This could mean our clients and potential clients (local businesses) could be seeing less profits than usual. Therefore, they may be less willing to invest in advertising services without the profits they used to. Though this presents itself as an obstacle, this could be an opportunity for us. There is potential to gain clients if we communicate ourselves as a more cost-effective option.

I spoke with Shelly Scott, an Account Executive and Recruitment Specialist here at the Des Moines Radio Group. She mentioned to me that she recently signed a new client, Marzetti's, who makes frozen pastas. They came to her, upon referral, after being dissatisfied with their success in advertising with Cumulous Media-- one of our primary competitors, along with iHeart Media. Marzetti's was paying five thousand dollars for a two-week spot with Cumulous, but Scott knew she could do better. She was able to give them a four-week spot for four thousand dollars.

Marzetti's is a prime example of the type of public we are trying to reach. There is no telling how many clients like Marzetti's could be out there, which is why I strongly recommend leaning into communicating the message that we are the most cost-effective option when it

comes to radio advertising in Des Moines. I say cost effective intentionally, rather than cheapest. Not only do we offer the most reasonable pricing, but also the quality, one-on-one attention each of our sales associates bring to each of their clients that our competitors lack. Scott stressed the importance of those relationships— “It’s about strengthening the ones you have with clients while building new ones.” And this message has been echoed from other staff at the Des Moines Radio Group. Jenny Bessman, Director of Promotions said: “We aren’t just looking to make money, we are looking to build a relationship.” This is another strength we have over our competitors, and a key message to get across to our publics.

In broad terms, our strengths are in marketing. We do a great job of marketing for our clients. Many of our clients have voiced their satisfaction with their individualized solution from the Des Moines Radio Group, and the success they’ve seen in those campaigns. Another strength of ours is creativity and originality. We have more in-house DJ’s than any other radio group in the state. All of whom, create compelling, entertaining, content as their livelihood. This strength is a huge asset to us because it solves our central issue quite simply. When looking at weaknesses, we fail to allocate resources to marketing for our own brand. We deny ourselves what we do so well for our clients. Luckily, with a little extra devotion we will see the results we are looking for in around sixth months to a year’s time.

In terms of end goals, we would like to see the Des Moines Radio Group become a household name for the citizens of Des Moines and surrounding areas. Notorious for all that we give away to the community both in prizes and in philanthropic efforts, as well as our exceptional marketing services.

In addition to increasing our social media presence, posting the a ‘shop small’ series on Instagram, another suggestion I have is to distribute brochures. By creating a brochure for the

Des Moines Radio Group and showing up to events in the community, this could help us in both our goal of getting our brand across to the people of Des Moines, as well as getting our name out to potential clients. Though we are out in the community often with different stations, we aren't normally there on behalf of the radio group as a whole. We could just be there to hand our promotional items and inform people about what we do. As for content in the brochure, we could have information about all we have given away in the past year, the events, and fundraisers we put on, and information about all of our stations.

Another series for social media could be testimonials from current clients who are satisfied with their experience. If we aired one of these a month, they could be delegated to a Sales Associate, possibly paired with a Host. It would be relatively easy execute, and a great way to spread the word about our exceptionally advertising services. I have heard something similar played on our stations and believe this is a great practice to lean into. Word-of-mouth advertising has proven to be one of the top ways to advertise, especially among Millennials and Gen Z (Freedman, M. *Why word of mouth beats advertising.*) If nothing else, we could type up an inquiry letter to send to our clients to see if any of them would be willing to participate and go from there. Another way to engage with this method of marketing is referral programs. If we get a new client based on a referral from a previous client, we could reward the current client with some kind of discount.

One final, simple recommendation I have is to add a page to the Des Moines Radio Group Website on our navigation panel that reads 'Advertise with Us'. I've noticed this on competitor's websites and believe it would be a great way to make our services more known and accessible.

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