Marketing and Management Recommendations

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report submitted to the Faculty

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Degree of Bachelor of Science

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1. marketing
2. computers
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Abstract

In order to better facilitate Pride's youth initiative, revenue must be pulled from major grants and the multiple services offered. The projects purpose is to make marketing and management recommendations to serve as a guideline for future operations of Pride. The main goal is to make recommendations that will enable Pride to continue providing its services, which fund the youth programs, to local colleges and businesses. On a larger scale, the project will help to reorganize Pride, based on the recommendations, and enable the continuation and expansion of its youth education programs.

Executive Summary

Many youth in the Worcester area do not have the opportunity to learn about computer technology. Pride Productions provides this service. Few organizations in the area have facilitates or resources to provide education dealing with technology. Pride Productions does have the resources and facilities to educate Worcester's youth, and strengthen the community.

However, due to the company's non-profit status, most funding is received through grants and donations. Due to their new expansion into the Worcester Common Outlet Mall, these funds can no longer fully support Pride. Therefore, Pride has recently started to provide revenue-generating services to help offset the operating costs of their educational programs.

These services, although very valuable in today's technologically advanced society, have not fared well at Pride. Pride is still currently struggling to maintain its youth educational programs. It would be a shame to the Worcester community to lose an organization, such as Pride, that cares deeply about the success of these youth.

By researching marketing and management policies and practices, a better understanding of how to help Pride has been obtained. Recommendations, based on this research, have been developed for both the management of Pride and the marketing of its services.

The project involved analyzing past and present budgets along with resources and assets currently at Pride. This information has provided a guideline of the operating procedures and limitations that Pride currently has. A benchmarking process of Pride's three main services; Video Production, Sign Making, and Graphic Design, was

conducted. This was done with companies in the Western and Central, MA area that agreed to participate.

Past budgets were looked at and discoveries were made about how Pride budgets their organization. Fund accounting is used by many non-profit organizations due to the multiple incoming funds and their designation of what they can be used for. Recommendations have been made for Pride to adopt this practice of fund accounting. Organization of the resources and vendors were also assessed along with the feasibility of outsourcing all services. Recommendations were made regarding the outsourcing strategy Pride currently uses.

Benchmarking provided the necessary information to make these recommendations and provided an understanding of how to organize and manage the services offered. Recommendations were made for the three services with regards of how to emulate some of the practices used by larger and more successful companies. Feasibility of certain aspects of the services was looked at in accordance with limitations imposed due to their budget.

Recommendations were made to lessen any differences that were discovered between Pride and the companies interviewed. Major focus was set on project development, hardware/software, education/experience, payment methods, and organization.

Lastly, an assessment of all the services offered by Pride including the Internet Café and business facility leasing was conducted. An analysis using the Four P's approach was used. The four P's identified the major aspects of marketing that need to be met successfully in order to improve Pride's services. Recommendations have been

made to develop a specific target audience of each on of their services. Then a promotional campaign must be developed and actively implemented. Pride can no longer advertise its youth shows and expect to receive business for its profitable services.

In conclusion, developing the strengths of Pride and closing existing gaps will help to strengthen the organization. The goal is to help better organize Pride and to structuralize the future of the organization. The hope in doing this will be the continued success and expansion of the youth technology educational services that are offered by Pride.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Throughout most of the 20th century, the city of Worcester was a booming

industrial and manufacturing zone. Around the mid-point of the century, Worcester

suffered from a decline in the manufacturing industry. This loss was due to companies

closing and a migration of jobs from the city. "Factories in inner cities closed for one of

three reasons: company bankruptcy, companies switching production and companies

switching location" (Hall, 38, 2002). The advancement of technology relieved

companies of the obligation to centrally locate in order to maximize business. Most

companies relocated outside of Worcester where profits could be increased. Many

families followed these companies and left the city. Unfortunately, families with lower

income were left behind because they could not afford to move.

The amount of people left behind greatly exceeded the number of jobs available.

"The worst affected areas in terms of overall increases in unemployment were the urban

areas" (Hall, 47, 2002). This loss of employment opportunity and economic decline has

created a need for the revitalization of the city of Worcester.

While economic conditions have improved, influenced by the rise in technology,

Worcester still has areas with low-income populations and high unemployment rates.

Parents of low-income families are forced to work long hours at multiple jobs for

financial stability. The children of these families are often left home after school with no

parental supervision or guidance. These conditions have resulted in an increase of

underprivileged and at risk youth in Worcester.

Many non-profit organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club, have been

established in Worcester to provide guidance to these youth. They provide after school

activities that keep kids off the street but do not focus these activities on education. Pride Productions provides an after school outlet which keeps the children off the streets while giving them the technological skills necessary to be successful in Graphic Design, Video Production and computers. The youth of Worcester are not all given the same opportunity to learn and advance themselves in the field of computer technology. Pride Productions provides these opportunities.

Currently, Pride is facing revenue and funding issues, and is having difficulty keeping its doors open to help and educate the youth of Worcester. Management and marketing recommendations will be made to the president of Pride Productions, Mr. Ernest Floyd. These recommendations will increase the awareness of revenue generating services, which helps fund their youth education programs. This will be done by assessing the multi-media services offered to the Worcester community. The project will re-assess Pride's existing management and marketing plan, undertake an internal evaluation, and identify appropriate promotional strategies to increase awareness of the services provided.

A familiarity with Pride Production's facilities, available programs and services must be obtained in order to make the recommendations. Furthermore, understanding the current structure of Pride's staff and each member's responsibilities will be essential. The course of action will involve benchmarking Pride through information obtained by interviews, data collection and interaction with participating benchmarking partners.

Recommendations will be made to generate more revenue and funding by increasing the awareness of Pride's services, thus allowing them to compete in their market more effectively. By accomplishing these goals, Pride will be able to continue its

small role in the pursuit of urban revitalization by serving the at-risk youth of Worcester.

These youth are at a crucial point in time of their lives. One or two decisions can

influence who they will become. Helping Pride ensures an increase in opportunity and

positive influence on all youth that participate in their programs.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Background

Pride Productions is a non-profit organization that founded in 1994 to produce a television show for children, made by children. The goal was to emphasize the diversity and cultural benefits that Worcester communities have to offer. Today Pride Productions teaches the youth community valuable skills in computer technology and multi-media through the use of its two organizations, the Multi-Media Clubhouse and the Community Access Technology Center (www.onthecommon.com).

2.1.1 Activities

The Multi-Media Clubhouse educates youths between the ages of 12-18 in media, technology, website design, script writing, critical thinking, public speaking, and television. The highlight of this center is its TV show, "Youth Unity" which is produced and co-hosted by local youth ("The Positive Posse") from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds of the Worcester community. The show consists of youth traveling to places around the Worcester area and beyond, and showing how important technology is in every day life. For example, a show was filmed at Six Flags New England describing the design of roller coasters. This was done to show the youth of Worcester the benefits of mathematics and science in every day activities.

The clubhouse has a musical aspect to it as well. A small music studio allows youth to produce their own music on the computer, with a variety of instruments available thru the use of digital keyboards. Lessons are offered weekly in digital audio, which teaches youth how to mix music and signals together.

The other organization that Pride oversees is the Community Access Technology Center. The 2,000 square foot technology center is where underserved youth from Worcester have access to powerful tools for creating their own projects such as TV shows and computer animation in a safe and comfortable environment. The goal of the Community Access Technology Center is to assist youth in the development of IT applications like Power Point, Microsoft Word and Excel (www.onthecommon.com). Programs in Graphic Design are also taught in the center.

Workshops, mentoring, peer coaching and various support services are available to all participants of Pride's available programs. This center provides the critical experience that is necessary to attract better jobs both now and in the future. In order to provide these services to Worcester's youth, Pride must bring in funding and revenue from outside sources.

2.2 Non-Profit Organizations

Pride's non-profit status makes its processes different from a for-profit company. In order to understand this, it is important to grasp what it means to be a non-profit organization. A non-profit organization is "A legally constituted, nongovernmental, non-hospitable organization that has been granted exemption from the payment of federal and state income taxes and that actively seeks to contribute to the public welfare as its principal objective" (Wacht, 1991, 12).

A common misconception is that non-profit organizations rely completely on grants and funding to remain in business and cannot generate revenue by providing profitable services. Although funding does make up a large portion of the non-profit organization, this is not always the case. The non-profit organization can and must make

a profit by producing a surplus within the organization (www.mapnp.com).   If no profit

is made, the company may go out of business. The difference between for-profit and

non-profit organizations is that the surplus produced is not given out to owners and

shareholders, but rather reinvested back into the company at the end of the fiscal year.

Most non-profit organizations are created with the recognition that there is some

community need that is not met by the traditional private sector. Mr. Ernie Floyd,

president of Pride Productions, recognized the need of educating the youth of Worcester

in the field of technology. Although Mr. Floyd can and does draw a salary, Pride's

primary motivation is not to make money, but to provide a service to Worcester's youth.

2.2.1 Types of Non-Profits

There are two types of non-profit organizations: trading and non-trading. Non-

trading organizations do not offer profit-generating services to clients and rely

completely on funding. However, trading organizations have the ability to produce a

surplus, which decreases the reliability of funding. Pride Productions is an example of a

trading organization. It operates like a business and offers its services to clients.

Non-profits can further be broken down into two categories. They are the non-

profit corporation and the un-incorporated association (Wacht, 1991, 15). An un-

incorporated association cannot own property and is attractive because it cannot be sued

directly, but its members can. A corporation is a legal entity that allows for ownership of

property and the ability to borrow money and engage in trade. However, even though

they can be sued directly, being a corporation is attractive due to the ability of ownership.

Therefore Pride is a corporation. Non-profit Corporations can be sued, and must follow a

few basic requirements. There must be one incorporator/owner, at least three directors,

an appointed agent, and at least three officers. Pride Productions must follow these requirements in order to legally operate as a non-profit.

Non-profit organizations are tax-exempt which means that the organization does not have to pay federal taxes. Many non-profit organizations file for this status and for good reason. It allows the non-profit entity to attract more supporters and donations from businesses because of the tax benefits to these businesses. Most organizations seek tax-exempt status under IRS code, section 501 (c) (3) (Hopkins, 1989, 22). To be accepted under this code the organization must provide some type of educational, religious, or charitable service. Pride falls under this category because they are an institution dealing with education in multi-media and computer technology.

2.2.2 Revenue and Funding

Pride receives most of its revenue from grants, colleges, and businesses. Pride rents the use of this center to local businesses and colleges that need additional facilities for functions, meetings or classes. Walk-ins are welcomed to check their e-mail for a small fee. Other contributors to Pride include businesses that hire them to produce banners, commercials, Graphic Design, signage or Video Production.

Because they are a trading corporation, Pride has the ability to generate revenue to reduce its dependency on funding. However, Pride's primary source of income is dependent on sponsors for funding due to a lack of business from its services. Supporting a non-profit organization such as Pride productions is a benefit to the community because through its use of the Multi-Media Clubhouse and Community Access Technology Center; Pride provides young adults with the technical skills and experience to compete professionally in today's digital economy (www.onthecommon.com).

Although entities such as Pride Productions sell their services in order to generate revenue to accomplish their mission, non-profit organizations can also obtain outside funding. Funding can come from different sources such as grants and donations. These grants and donations are not easy to obtain. Many non-profit organizations rely heavily on providing services to generate revenue. To successfully obtain revenue for their youth program they must increase the use of their services. Therefore it is important that Pride Productions have a robust marketing and management plan.

2.3 Managing and Marketing Relations

Marketing and management go hand in hand. To have a successful marketing plan, it is necessary to have a successful management plan. Productively developing and implementing a marketing and management plan is essential to the success of any organization. The ability to evaluate these plans consistently over time is also a key factor. For example, The National Paraplegic Foundation (NPF), a non-profit organization, was starting to have funding problems.

> "They developed a new corporate campaign entitled 'Look at us now!' The campaign was intended to capitalize on the success of the organization over the previous 45 years. The problem was that the campaign could not clearly define success since the organization had no methodology to compute its outcome measures" (Pyc, 2001, 1).

The lack of a well thought out management and marketing plan led to little success for the NPF campaign.

However, once this was realized a new management and marketing plan was initiated, one that contained research about the organization and its goals. Two years later, the organization had secured 44 corporate sponsors. "Adopting various management practices and strategies is likely to enhance effectiveness "(Herman, 1998,

1). This is just one example of how effectively developing a marketing and management plan will lead to success for the organization.

2.4 Management

Management is defined as, "The process of setting and accomplishing goals through the use and coordination of human, technical, and financial resources within the context of the environment" (Baird, 1990, 6). Management must set realistic goals and objectives for the organization, determine what resources are needed and manage them in a way in which the desired result is achieved affectively and efficiently. Management must also meet the customer's needs and work within the constraints presented to them (Baird, 1990, 6). It is important for management to keep the employees focused and motivated on common goals introduced throughout the marketing plan. After implementation, management must also be aware of any flaws in the plan after implementation and make any necessary changes swiftly and efficiently. This allows a non-profit organization to successfully accomplish their objectives and goals. There are some basic functions of management that help an organization keep a steady management plan.

2.4.1 Initial Planning

The main objective of good management is to determine the balance of responsibilities throughout the organization and how focused each employee is on the mission statement. Some employees may be overloaded with responsibility while others may be under used. Determining how focused the staff is on Pride's mission will also give an idea of how well management is directing them. Organizing and directing are

two basic functions of management that need to be understood before one can strategize on how to manage an organization like Pride Productions.

Organizing involves identifying what the responsibilities are for the desired goals, and being able to combine these tasks with the organizations resources. Pride must effectively identify their resources and organize actions that need to be taken. Planning identifies what resources are available and who can work on them. It also helps to provide direction.

Effective *direction* is the ability to focus the resources and people in the direction of the marketing plan. This can be accomplished by strong motivation and communication. The most important job management has is keeping employees and volunteers focused. Standards must be set and upheld. If Pride's standards are clearly defined, the non-profit organization will become very efficient. Setting these standards will be one of the key points while working with Pride (Baird, 1990, 10). Once the staff is focused on Pride's mission and goals collectively, the next step is to implement the plan.

Implementation completes the transition from marketing to management by incorporating adopted strategies throughout the relevant system (Bryson, 1995, 166). Implementation of your marketing plan is the most crucial step in management. Failure to remain focused on the crafted plan and its proper and effective execution will result in a loss of profit and great waste of time. This task alone is easily the most complicated and time-consuming part of management (Thompson and Strickland, 2003, 19). From Mr. Floyd all the way down to the volunteers, each individual has to re-assess their

responsibilities and ask themselves what has to be done in my area to execute my piece of the plan and how can I best get it done (Thompson and Strickland, 2003,19)?

Execution should be a rapid and smooth introduction of the marketing plan. All the employees of Pride should have a common goal and focus. Incorporating a debugging process to identify and fix the difficulties that inevitably arise as a new solution is put in place is very important. Key decision makers should pay regular attention to how implementation is preceding in order to focus attention on any difficulties and how to address them (Bryson, 1995, 167). This responsibility will fall mostly on Mr. Floyd's shoulders. He is a key factor in the success of Pride's marketing strategy.

2.4.2 Managing Pride Productions

The first step to organizing Pride is to determine what responsibilities are placed on each employee. This will define if each employee is over or under used. Once responsibilities are revised, Mr. Floyd must effectively direct his staff according to the marketing and management plan. Good communication and positive motivation are key methods to becoming a successful director.

Once this has all been dealt with, evaluations should be made to determine what goals have been reached and what can be improved on. These evaluations should differentiate between outputs and outcomes. Outputs are the actual actions, behaviors, products, services or other direct consequences produced by the policy changes. Outcomes are the ramifications of those outputs. Outputs are substantive changes while outcomes include symbolic interpretations (Bryson, 1995, 167). This is done to keep the employees on track. Pride should set up regular review sessions and meetings with all

the vendors to constantly monitor where the plan is going, how it got there, and to discuss any necessary adjustments that need to be made.

2.5 Marketing

Marketing is defined as a "systematic process by which voluntary exchange is affected. It employs well-crafted programs as opposed to random actions to achieve results" (Gelatt, 1992, 35). Pride's status as a trading, tax-exempt, non-profit corporation provides a number of ways to obtain these exchanges. It can receive funding or donations for a specific cause, or provide services for revenue. Funding plays a substantial role in any non-profit organization. Obtaining funding in an organized and developed manner is where marketing fits into the non-profit organization.

Marketing is a core function because it keeps the organization afloat through publicity and fundraising. Without a strong marketing plan, potential sponsors may not be aware of the organization and funding could be lost. Success of a non-profit organization is directly related to how well marketing is understood.

"A recent study suggests that few non-profit organizations have incorporated a comprehensive approach to marketing. While many non-profits perform one or more marketing functions, few have embraced a marketing approach to operations" (Akchin, 2001, 1). This means that many organizations use one principle of marketing such as promotion, but most of them fail to use all the principles. Only by understanding the basic framework of marketing, can recommendations be made for an effective plan for Pride Productions.

Marketing is a body of knowledge and skills that are very elaborate (Gelatt, 1992, 53). Marketing is considered to be a science, and many times it is one with serious flaws. Several reasons why marketing sometimes fails include poor timing, a wrong analysis of the market, or failure to recognize that the consumer market is low.

It can be successfully mastered with the right planning, research tools and resources. "The aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous. The aim is to know and understand the customer so well that the product or services fits him and sells itself." (Peter Drucker, 1990, 74)

Questions that arise are how does one go about marketing and managing an organization? What strategies exist that will enable Pride to increase its funding? One useful strategy in answering these questions is to understand the Four P's framework.

2.5.1 The Four P's Framework

When dealing with a marketing plan, having some knowledge of the framework is important. Understanding the need for exchange is not the only factor. There are four controllable components of marketing that are essential to the plans success. They are called the "four **P**'s" framework: Product, price, promotion and place (Gelatt, 1992, 35). How these elements apply to non-profit organizations is discussed below.

The *product* is the most important of all the elements and can be seen as the foundation of the non-profit organization. Properly identifying what the customer wants is the first step to successfully design a marketing plan. "Knowing what the constituents of the organization want and need is at the core of any effective marketing plan" (Gelatt, 1992, 36). It is also necessary to keep in mind that there needs to be some product differentiation. There will be other companies and organizations that offer the same or

similar products. It is important that there be a difference in the product that makes the customer choose Pride over the competition.

Price is the next aspect in developing a marketing plan. Many non-profit organizations fail to adequately consider their prices, and they often wind up being to low. Fair price is driven by perceptions. If what an organization does is perceived at a certain value, then the organization will be able to price accordingly (Cravens, 1982, 65). Where clients show that they do not know the true price or drastically misjudge it, the marketer will have to base his recommendations on their perceptions (Rados, 1996, 253). If Pride Productions is radically over or under pricing their products and services, potential clients will go elsewhere. Pride needs to assess each service and price them accordingly. In doing so, they must also look to their competitors and see how they price in relation to them. Establishing an acceptable price helps to set up the next step of the Four P's framework, Promotion.

Promotion raises awareness of the available product or service to potential clients that may otherwise not have known about it. If the customer is not aware of the products and services offered, then even the best product and price will sit on the shelf. With the right marketing plan, the target audience will become aware of the products and services provided by Pride. Methods of promotion include: TV commercials, radio, signs, Yellow Pages, business cards, references, Internet and word of mouth. The mode selected is based on the financial status of the organization as well as the type of crowd trying to be reached (Gelatt, 1992, 36). An institution such as a college might choose television as their mode of advertisement. Not only because they can afford it, but also because it is the most effective way to reach their target audience. Smaller organizations such as Pride

Productions may use the Internet or word of mouth. The correct mode, specific to the marketing plan, should be chosen to efficiently target the appropriate audience.

Placement is the final aspect to consider in a marketing plan. Placing your business in an easily accessible and comfortable environment is the most important part of placement (Gelatt, 1992, 36). The organization should be in a location that is both easily visible and highly accessible. Being located in a place where people can walk by and enquire about your services is a way of bringing in business. Accessibility can be the factor that attracts customers to one organization over another. Accessibility will allow customers to easily use the services that the organization provides without any hassle. The four "P's" are merely a framework that should be kept in mind when developing a marketing plan.

Target Market

"A target market is an identifiable group of people that could benefit from purchasing your product, visiting your site, and/or responding to some other call to action" (http://www.websitemarketingplan.com/TacticsArticle.htm). Often market segmentation is used as a method of identifying a group of consumers, within a broader market, that has similar characteristics and needs. Segments can be identified by examining demographic, psychographic, and behavioral differences. For example: a car manufacturer may identify different types of consumers preferring different styles of cars, so they will segment their car buying markets accordingly. If younger car buyers with high incomes will be more likely to buy a sports car, while an older population of car buyers may be more likely to purchase a town car. Once these segments are identified, marketers can target each segment. Again, the marketer may identify a number of

specialty magazines that the young, affluent market reads, thus they will run their advertisements for sports cars in these magazines (www.udel.edu/alex/dictionary.html).

2.5.2 Marketing Pride

The four P's framework and target market focus thinking on the idea that all marketing decisions must work together as a whole. Not only will the four P's framework provide an organized method of analysis, but it will also be crucial in helping Pride identify a target market.

Use of the four P's framework and target market to develop marketing recommendations for Pride Productions will be relied on heavily. However, there are other resources that maybe used as well, such as research. Research will help to identify the areas that need improvement in Pride's current marketing plan.

2.6 Research

All successful businesses rely heavily on marketing research, to help them enhance their marketing plan. Research questions the products, services, customers and staff that give relevant insight into improvement as well as decrease the chance of marketing failure (Rados, 1996, 105). There are different methods of research that are used to question and develop different areas of the marketing plan. These methods include: exploratory, formative, descriptive and developmental research (Rados, 1996, 107).

2.6.1 Exploratory Research

Exploratory research helps determine the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects by asking internal and external questions. Asking internally will answer questions as to what is going on within the organization, specifically the staff and volunteers. Asking externally educates the organization about the customer's likes, dislikes and future suggestions. Interviews, focus groups, and surveys are all tools used to reach the staff and customers and to help an organization understand their needs.

2.6.2 Formative Research

Formative research includes evaluating the products and services periodically. Even the best products need to be evaluated from time to time. Sometimes sales figures alone will supply all the necessary information (Gelatt, 1992, 46). This will help to keep the marketing plan on course and allow any necessary adjustments to be made.

These different methods of research can be utilized in the assorted stages of developing a marketing plan and will more clearly define Pride's limitations and boundaries. Research is one of the important concepts in marketing. Mastering the theory of research will help in employing various strategies while developing marketing recommendations.

2.6.3 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research is done to describe and measure any problems or weaknesses that exist in the current plan. Some tools for conducting descriptive research are surveys and questionnaires. By evaluating the responses, the researchers are describing and measuring the problem (Rados, 105). By surveying Pride's customers, certain problems

or issues may arise that could be dealt with in the new marketing plan. This research will describe and measure how satisfied Pride Production's customers are.

Type of research	Uses	Implications for Pride
Exploratory	Feedback from staff and customers	Status of Pride
Formative	Evaluating products and services	Limitations
Descriptive	Identifying the problems	Outline for the plan

Table 1 Research Summary

2.7 Strategy

The tasks of crafting, implementing, and executing company strategies are the heart and soul of managing a business enterprise. A company's strategy is the game plan management is using to stake out a market position, conduct its operations, attract and please customers, compete successfully and achieve organizational objectives.

Crafting a strategy involves saying, in effect, among all the paths and actions, the organization has decided to move in this direction. The focus will be on these markets and customer needs and compete in this fashion. A strategy thus entails managerial choices among alternatives and signals organizational commitment to specific markets, competitive approaches and ways of operating (Thompson and Strickland, 2002, 3). It will be essential for Pride to precisely and accurately define their specific market and to remain focused on it. Once this is achieved, then a firm structure can be established allowing management to stay on track.

When crafting company strategy, the first step should be to look at what key elements you want to advertise and why, who your potential clients will be, and how this will affect the organization in the future. A developmental strategy attempts to improve

the organization's status, capacity, resources, and influence (Bryson, 1995, 280). Pride wants to attract a larger client base that would benefit from the use of their services and products by offering competitive prices. To do this successfully, they must understand what the competition is offering for products and services and properly evaluate each.

It is important for Pride to look at other organizations for guidance. Benchmarking between competitor strategies and evaluating their approach will give a guideline as to what could be made more appealing to customers. Formative research can be used to investigate if it would be economically feasible to redevelop existing products and offer new and improved services; something to enhance the organizations image in the public eye. When someone has to decide where to acquire these specific services and/or products, the choice will be simple. Catering to the customer's own specific strategy will help to achieve the desired results.

The first thing to remember is that marketing is planning. Without some kind of "map" marketing cannot be successful. The next step is to obtain a mission statement, develop some goals and objectives and a series of steps to achieve those goals

It is vital that the organization follow the task of asking questions and listening to the responses of the customers. This can be accomplished by utilizing descriptive research to understand the customer pool. Employing a customer advisory board that meets periodically throughout the year to conduct descriptive research through focus groups; targeted to specific topics such as new ideas or marketing plans is one option. Another is to interview the customers, donors, sponsors, volunteers and staff on a regular basis. This way everyone involved with the organization feels they are having a say in the product and direction of the company. Allowing the customers to give suggestions

and actually utilizing their feedback gives them a sense that they are making a wise investment. These are some strategies that make the difficult task of marketing and management recommendations more feasible.

2.8 Summary

The preceding research has given understanding and insight for the recommendations that are gong to be made. The hope is that these recommendations will allow Pride Productions to increase its funding and revenue form its services. The following is what must be done to make these recommendations:

1. Pride's limitations will be examined and a determination will be made as to how they constrict or help Pride.

2. Benchmarking the services with other similar companies will be useful in closing any gaps within the management and marketing of Pride.

3. The Four P's will be used to further analyze the services offered at Pride and to develop recommendations based on the current marketing plan.

These three aspects will be discussed in the following section.

Chapter 3 Methodology

The research in this chapter focused on three main topics, one being the operating limitations and boundaries that restrict Pride and its funding. The second is how Pride functions in comparison to companies that provide similar services and, finally, all the services that Pride provides were addressed and analyzed using the four P's as a marketing guideline. Data collection and analysis for each of these topics will be discussed and justified. The results expected from each method of research will then be explained in more detail.

3.1 Limitations and Boundaries

The first priority was to determine what operating limitations and boundaries are placed on Pride? Defining Pride's financial and physical capabilities has provided insight into how the organization is currently run and presented a baseline to refer to throughout the project.

Properly organizing the budget directly affects Pride's capabilities. For example, generated revenue may be sufficient to support the company's needs, but a poor budgeting plan can cause financial distress. Financial reports for Pride were reviewed to determine revenue generated annually, percentages allocated for advertising and marketing, and how much funding is required to balance out the budget.

Pride's current vendors, volunteers and physical resources have also been examined. Each plays a key role in how much work Pride can accommodate. Pride's delegation of responsibilities determine the over or under use of each vendor and how this limits them. Also, Pride's physical limitations such as hardware, software and space were compared to other companies with similar services.

3.1.1 Archival Data

The first method of data collection was archival. There are many advantages to using archival data; how the data affects people and their environment can be generalized. Archival data also provides insight into the past and social changes that have occurred over time. From this data, trends can be extracted and evaluations as to why things have changed can be made, and extrapolated into the future. Understanding these changes will inevitably help in the future as progress is made toward the project goals (Singleton, 1999, 367-368).

Archival data can be broken down into five broad areas: (1) Public documents and official records, including the extensive archives of the Census Bureau; (2) private documents; (3) mass media; (4) physical, non-verbal materials; and (5) social sciences data archives (Singleton, 1999, 357). Private documents were requested and reviewed to gather data necessary to assess Pride's financial limitations.

Private documents are not available to the public, but rather provided by the individual or organization. These documents range from letters to inventories, to daily logs (Singleton, 1999, 358). These documents were obtained directly from Pride. The records also provided Pride's financial history, defining how strategically, effectively and efficiently the company has been run, both presently and in the past.

Data that was requested includes: budgets for the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 fiscal years, proposed 2003 budget, lists of employees, responsibilities and payroll, lists of all hardware and software, lists of past and present clients and lists of services provided, including the pricing of each.

3.1.2 Interviews

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with the vendors and Ernest Floyd, president of Pride Productions were conducted. A semi-structured interview is "a type of interview that, while having specific objectives, permits the interviewer some freedom in meeting them. The scope of the interview would be limited to certain sub-topics, and key questions would be developed in advance" (Singleton, 1999, 567). These interviews were used to determine any restrictions Mr. Floyd feels are placed on his company. By using semi-structured interviews, Mr. Floyd and his vendors were able to answer questions with the freedom to elaborate on any key issues that may not have been addressed. Structured interviews can make the respondent feel that "they cannot converse with the researcher or interviewer, they cannot qualify or expand answers, and they may be forced to choose among alternative answers that they find unsatisfactory" (Singleton, 1999, 253). The semi-structured interview prevents this problem and allows the respondent to provide useful knowledge while staying focused on the objective. Along with archival data, interviewing Pride's vendors has provided additional information about the financial and physical limitations placed on the organization.

3.1.3 Expected Results

From these methods, a baseline of Pride's limitations and boundaries was clearly defined. The archival data collected has defined a history of Pride's revenue, funding, and expenses. This has helped to differentiate between funding from donations and revenue of Pride's services. These figures were compared with Pride's expenses. This will provide Mr. Floyd with a better understanding of Pride's financial status. It will also establish Pride's current baseline. Now that this baseline has been defined, how much

revenue Pride requires meeting its minimum goals for the near future can be determined. This baseline can also be projected into the future to help facilitate any goals Pride has.

Archival data has also provided information to better understand the budget allocation within Pride. Understanding how much money is allotted for Pride's current marketing plan has helped to scope the size and complexity of the recommended marketing plan.

Along with determining Pride's financial status, interviews were conducted with Ernie Floyd to determine the amount, type and quality of resources that Pride currently has. For example, determining what type of software Pride uses to provide their services and comparing this quality of work with other companies has played a key role in the benchmarking and gap analysis of Pride.

All of this data collection and interviewing has lead to one major component of the project. This component understands the possibilities that exist right now at Pride, and what Pride can and cannot do based on these limitations. This will be vital in the benchmarking and analysis, which can be seen in figure 2.

3.2 Benchmarking Pride Productions

Now that Pride's limitations have been defined, an informed and structured improvement plan has been made for their services.   This was accomplished by benchmarking Pride with companies that were open and willing to participate in the process. This has helped to organize and define improvements. Benchmarking is defined as, "an improvement process used to discover and incorporate best practices into your corporation. Benchmarking is the preferred process used to identify and understand the elements (causes) of superior or world-class performance in a particular work process"

(Damelio, 1, 1995). Benchmarking can be broken down into three phases: Phase I is *Analysis*, Phase II is *Discovery* and Phase III is *Implementation*. Phase III of the benchmarking process will be left to Pride Productions. These phases will be discussed in greater detail later on in the chapter. Also, there are a few key elements involved with benchmarking: *process*, *practice*, *metrics* and *enablers.*

   A *process* is a repeatable sequence of steps used to transform an input into an output that has value to an internal or external customer. A process includes all the steps required from start to finish of the project. The three processes of Pride that were benchmarked are: digital Video Production, Graphic Design, and Sign Making. (Damelio, 6, 1995).

   Practices are methods used to perform each step involved in the process and define how each step is performed. Often times, many practices are required to complete a single process. Also, more than one practice method may be available to complete the same process. This suggests one practice may be more efficient than another.

   Metrics measure the performance of your process and each individual practice. Metrics have allowed us to clearly define the most favorable practices involved in each process when making recommendations involving a marketing and management plan for Pride Productions. Metrics have enabled us to project how Pride's budget may change due to alterations in practices or processes.

   Enablers are conditions that influence the effectiveness of each practice. For example, the training, experience and effectiveness of Pride's vendors all directly affect the metrics of each practice (Damelio, 7, 1995).

3.2.1 Gap Analysis

In order to benchmark Pride, Phases I and II of the process were completed. These phases are *Analysis* and *Discovery.*

Analysis entails producing an internal audit of the practices and services offered by Pride. This has been done through data collection and interviews with each designated service employee. For example, Pride performs Video Production, Graphic Design and Sign Design. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the department head of each service to acquire all necessary data. This type of interview allows for more open-ended questions to be asked, thereby gaining a better understanding of the processes at Pride. To structure these interviews, a process analysis was conducted. In this analysis a relationship was developed between the practices and metrics/enablers that go along with each process. This helped in developing the interview questions.

Discovery involves researching partners, or companies that Pride either competes with or can learn from (Damelio, 16, 1995). These companies have all been interviewed applying the same interview structure used at Pride. After this information was collected, a gap analysis was performed which compared metrics and certain processes of each company with Pride. Any gaps that were discovered have been analyzed and recommendations to improve the processes of Pride Productions have been made and are discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5. A sample of the analysis is attached as Appendix A and B.

In order to properly benchmark Pride, the processes that each competitor takes to make their companies successful must be fully understood. To accomplish this, all

companies were informed of the project goals and were open and willing to participate in the benchmarking analysis. This was a difficult task to accomplish due to such a competitive local market. Western and Central Massachusetts companies that fall under the three categories listed above were sampled.

These companies were selected based on their overall success and history compared to Pride Productions; the only companies benchmarked were ones that Pride can learn from. Overall, three companies each from Western, MA and Central, MA were selected. Each company offered one service that Pride offers. These six companies and Pride have been benchmarked, and a gap analysis was performed.

The sampling was conducted by consulting the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce (WRCC). The website of the WRCC helped identify local companies that offer the same services as Pride. The businesses are listed by category and the services of Video Production, Graphic Design, and Sign Making were researched. These categories were the strata sampling. Within each of these strata, samplings were done of business's that were willing to participate and help with the benchmarking process. The yellow pages were used along with some Internet research to find companies based out of the Western, MA area. Again, these companies were sampled based on the research gathered about their services and their willingness to participate.

3.2.2 Expected Results

Analyzing the competition helps to compare and contrast the pricing, quality of service, availability, accessibility, and promotional strategies of Pride. If the competition is successful, they were used as a guideline to understand Pride's deficiencies and to better market them against the competition. After performing the benchmarking and gap

analysis, Pride should be able to define where they are, where they could go and how they are going to get there through the implementation of the recommendations, as shown in Figure 1.
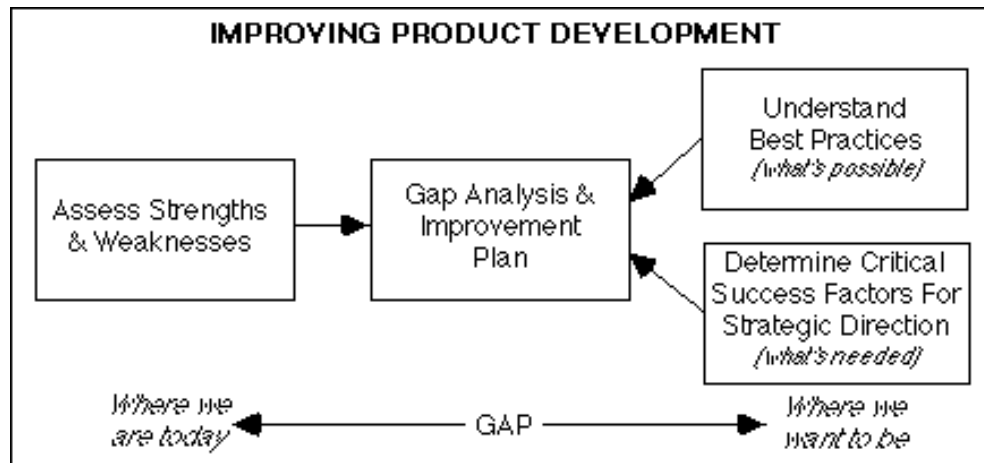
Figure 1 Benchmarking Process

This was the most important part of the methodology, as it has directly affected that were made to improve the organization. By doing a non-biased and detailed benchmark of Pride, the awareness of their market status and how to proceed in the future has been greatly increased.

3.3 Marketing Pride's Services

In order to develop an effective marketing plan for Pride, it was important to understand the foundations of their services, or in essence, the fundamental marketing aspects of each service. To analyze each service, the four P's framework was constructed and Pride's target market was analyzed as mentioned in Chapter 2. By having a sound understanding of Pride's products, prices, place, promotional strategies, and target market; useful marketing recommendations were made. To get accurate and detailed information in constructing the four P's framework and target market, semi-structured interviews, archival data and feedback from the benchmarking process were analyzed.

All these tools have allowed for recommending a marketing plan that will assist Pride in achieving its goals.

3.3.1 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews with Ernie Floyd, vendors and volunteers of Pride Productions has helped produce the necessary information to construct the four P's framework for each service. By interviewing Ernie, his perspective has defined what he feels is Pride's target market and what is used currently as advertising tools to reach them. Interviews with the vendors provided an insider perspective on the services offered by Pride. For example, whether they feel the advertising is adequate, whether the prices are reasonable and any other suggestions or insights that they had.

3.3.2 Archival data

Archival data such as brochures, fliers and the advertising budget was used to construct the four P's framework. By looking at the fliers and brochures currently used for promotion, the customer's perspective was better understood and recommendations were made to help Pride reach their target audience more efficiently. Additionally, the allotted budget for advertising has been kept in mind when making recommendations for the promotional aspects of each service.

3.3.3 Benchmarking Data

The benchmarking process has given insight into Pride's partners, how they organize their marketing plan and provided information about their services. After the benchmarking data was analyzed, a clear comparison of Pride and its partners was established. When constructing the four P's framework, the gap analysis, shown in appendix A and B, was used to measure Pride against the other companies for each aspect

of the framework. The four P's framework is now complete and will be referenced while making recommendations for a successful marketing plan.

3.3.4 Expected Results

By using the four P's framework to analyze each service, recommendations for each one's improvement have been made. This has also identified what services are in good condition. Since the status of each service has been determined, the most efficient methods to market them have been recommended. This will enable Pride to achieve more success and obtain more revenue. Overall, the goal is to structure and separate their services from the youth education programs. By doing this, Pride will be able to better focus on these services and market them more effectively to the local area businesses.

3.4 Conclusion

The three areas of research were chosen because of the nature of the information each one has provided for the development of the recommended plan. Investigating the limitations and boundaries placed on Pride has helped establish a solid guideline to reference. Along with this guideline, benchmarking similar companies has allowed for a more in depth look at more efficient methods used to provide each service to the community. Finally, using the four P's framework to analyze the marketing aspect of Pride's services has provided insight into the capabilities of each service and allowed for any necessary improvements in establishing a target audience to be recommended. Using the procedures of benchmarking, semi-structured interviews, data analysis, the four P's framework and target market analysis, all necessary recommendations for improvement were allowed to be made in a logical fashion.

Chapter 4 Results

4.1 Collected Results

The following chapter will involve a detailed discussion of the results obtained using the methods discussed in Chapter 3. The limitations that were found to be restricting Pride Productions will be discussed as well as some marketing aspects of their services. A detailed look at the Four P's framework of marketing and its results will be included. The benchmarking results will be broken down into the processes, practices, metrics, and enablers for both Pride and the six partner companies interviewed. All this data will be presented, and Chapter 5 will contain the actual benchmarking of Pride to its partner companies.

4.1.1 Financial Limitations

Pride's 2000, 2001, and 2002 budgets were obtained from Ernie Floyd's accountant Rosen & Dillaire, LLP. For the 2000 to 2001 fiscal year, Pride Productions had operating expenses of $92,044. However, only $73,235 of revenue was brought in causing Pride to lose $18, 809 for the year. But the year was started off with $42,349 in net assets, which led to a $23,540 beginning balance in assets for the 2001 fiscal year. This year saw a slight increase in the budget, up to $101,547. The total revenue generated was $100,190, causing Pride to almost break even for the year. Again it should be noted that although a non-profit company can make a profit, at the end of the year all of this profit must be reinvested back into the company. This is why the total revenue and total expenses are so close to one another every year.
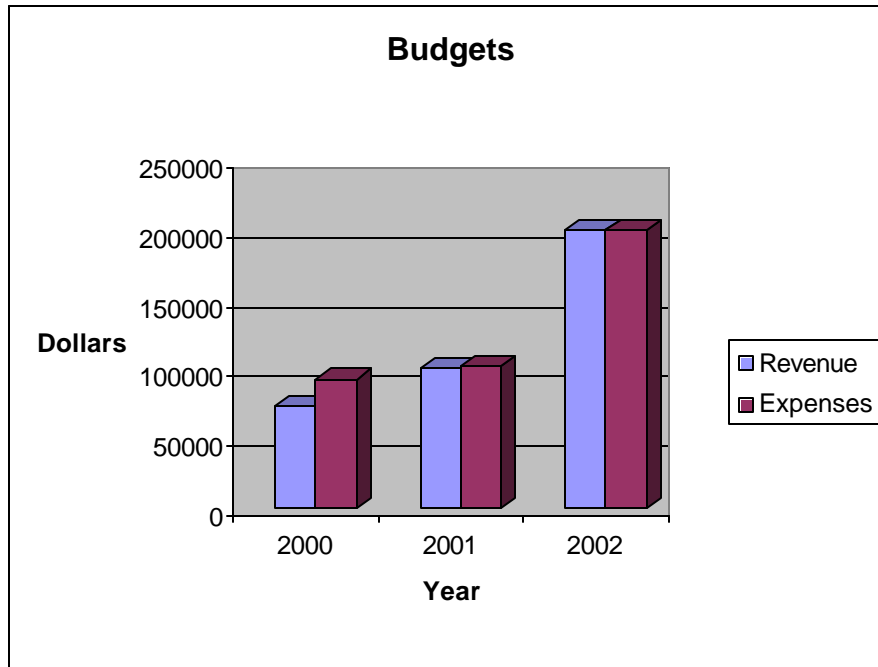
Budgets

Figure 2: Budgets

The 2002 fiscal year saw a doubling in Pride's budget to $199,760. The total revenue for the year was $200,160, thereby creating a profit that was put back into the company. These budgets can be seen in Figure 2.
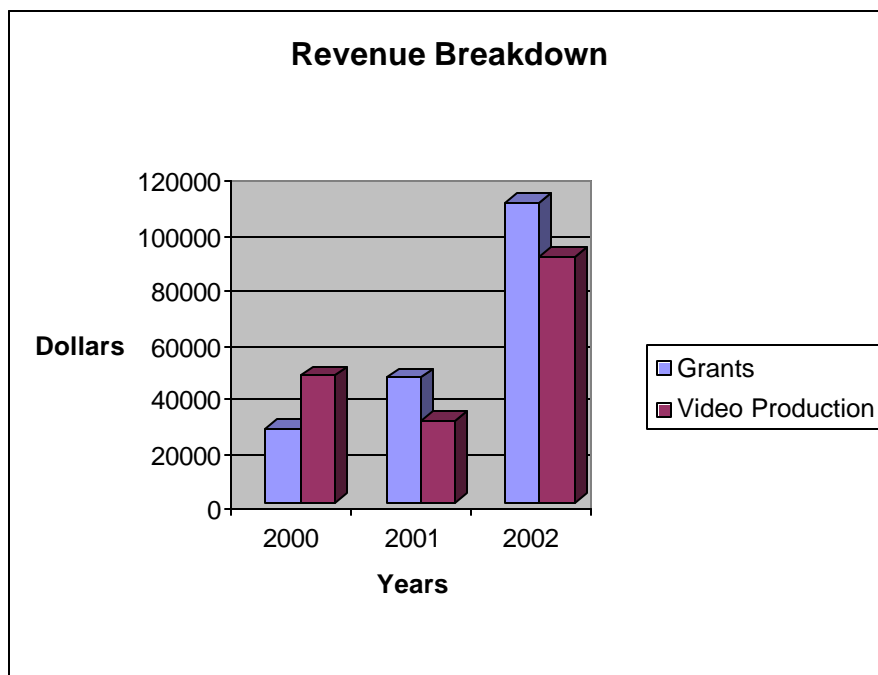
Revenue Breakdown

Figure 3: Revenue Breakdown

The budget records also indicated how much revenue was being received from donations and grants, and the Video Production services that Pride offers. These figures can be seen in Figure 3.

Over the three-year period, Pride has made a small attempt each year at advertising itself. The first year $1,320 was allotted to advertising, the 2001 year saw a small increase to $1,960, and the 2002 year saw a jump to $ 5,000. Through the financial limitation interview, with Ernie Floyd, it was found that the advertising funds for this year are $5,000. This money was appropriated for local cable TV commercials advertising a youth Job Fair that Pride hosted in February 2003. Funding was also allotted to promote Pride's educational services to the Boys and Girls club, and after school programs. The rest of the money was put into fliers, advertising what Pride is, and what they offer. However, it seems that none of this money was used to directly advertise Pride's revenue generating services.

Pride's tax-exempt status was also researched. This information can be found in the financial limitation interview as well. The owner of Pride believes that the key benefit to being a non-profit is that the organization can receive large donations from the private sector in order to support the company. This is important because it allows Pride to operate without complete dependency on revenue generated from its services. Although small donations are accepted, most donations that Pride has tried to obtain have been relatively large. Due to the lack of business for Pride's other services, Ernie Floyd feels he has to obtain the larger grants to keep Pride open. He also said Pride doesn't have to pay taxes on any of the donations they receive. This allows for additional revenue that Pride can use to run its youth programs and fund its services without having

to worry about being taxed by the state and federal governments. This is also true with Pride's vendors, who provide all the non-educational services that Pride offers. This is one of the incentives for the vendors at Pride, because they are able to write off any money given to Pride as a donation to a non-profit organization. Pride does not have to pay taxes or benefits for these vendors because they are not employees. Pride's financial limitations play a key role in how the company functions and the recommendations that can be made. Pride's physical limitations will also influence any recommendations made to the organization.

4.1.2 Physical Limitations

One of the major physical limitations that Pride faces is their organization of associates and availability. An associate list was obtained of all the vendors and employees of Pride, and is shown in Table 2. Relying on these vendors for all services has made Pride and outsourcing organization now. Outsourcing can have its advantages and disadvantages. Outsourcing, however, limits Pride's quality control of the services it offers.

Name	Title	Relation to Pride
Ernest C. Floyd	President	Employee
Aaron J Keyes	Media Production	Vendor
Brian Holohan	Sign Design Graphic Designer	Subcontractor
J. Spirit Wolf Vega	Operations Manager	Partner/Vendor
Tina Gaffney	Youth Unity Instructor	Vendor
Christopher A Topalian	Instructor	Vendor
Dianne C Langsford	Instructor/Administrator	Vendor
Nathan Carter	Desk Clerk	Volunteer
Georgia Young	Business Manager	Volunteer

Table 2: Associate List

Aaron Keyes and Ernie Floyd perform Video Production services. Ernie assists with the shooting and production. Aaron, however, is the editor; he performs any additional sound and graphic editing to the videos. Aaron was previously an employee, but a drive for no employees due to benefit costs and tax filings for Pride, has repositioned him to be a vendor. The current vendor payment methods are as follows:

?   If the customers are brought in through Pride Productions, then 65% of the project goes to Pride and 35% goes to the vendor. The 65% is looked upon as a donation to Pride.

?   If the customers are brought in through the vendor, but Prides facilities are still used, then 65% goes to the vendor and 35% goes to Pride. The 35% is looked upon as a donation to Pride.

For example, if a customer requests a video to be made and they come to Pride, Aaron will be contacted to perform the project. He will use Pride's facilities to edit and shoot the video. In the end he will donate 65% of the budget for the project back to Pride. On the other hand, if a customer were to go to Aaron and ask for a video to be made, Aaron would still come to Pride and use their facilities to edit and shoot. Aaron would then only give 35% of the projects budget back to Pride, because he used their facilities.

Brian Holohan is the subcontractor that designs and produces all the signs and window graphics. He is not an employee of Pride, but rather a subcontractor. The relationship between Pride and Brian is the same vendor relationship stated above.

J. Spirit Wolf Vega provides services for Graphic Design and web site development. Again, the same relationship exists between Pride and Spirit Wolf. These are the three key associates that make up Pride's multiple services.

The other associates assist Pride in their youth programs and educational programs. Although they are associates of Pride, they do not affect Pride's revenue for its non-educational services and therefore will not be included in determining the limitations of Pride.

The facility that Pride is housed in accommodates their youth programs nicely, but little room is left over for Video Production, Sign Making, and Graphic Design suites. Currently the video editing that is performed by Aaron is done on Macintosh computers, which seems to be the standard from other Video Production companies that were interviewed. The computer itself is a G4 Mac at 933MHz with high end editing programs Final Cut Pro and Adobe Photoshop.

No Sign Making is done at Pride, but rather Brian Holohan has an outside studio where the project is completed. There is actually a separate company that is run by Brian called Sunshine Sign. This makes Brain unique within the sense that all of his equipment and facilities are not located at Pride. However, Brian can use Pride's facility as an office to work out of and to meet clients in; although observations show this is not done very often.

Graphic Design is done at Pride also. Aaron performs Graphic Design for Video Production, as mentioned before, during the editing process. All other Graphic Design work, such as logos and web pages, is referred to J. Spirit Wolf Vega. Spirit Wolf owns his own company called DreamCatcherIT. This company does Graphic Design work,

digital photography and produces and maintains web pages. J. Spirit Wolf Vega also uses the facilities as an office to work out of and to meet clients. Unlike Brian, who also owns his own company, Spirit Wolf is now considered a partner with Pride Productions and is also the newly appointed manager of operations. DreamCatcherIT is now being associated with Pride, unlike Sunshine Sign. He is attempting to organize Pride as well as help develop more educational programs.

By understanding these limitations Pride will be benchmarked with the partners that have been selected. This will allow for an accurately performed gap analysis, and support the recommendations that will be made.

4.2 Benchmarking - Phase I Analysis

To properly benchmark Pride Productions, it is important to first understand their own processes, practices, metrics and enablers. This information provides a guideline to follow throughout the benchmarking process by defining key interview questions while providing a solid baseline of Pride Productions. The three major services (processes) provided by Pride Productions are as follows: Video Production, Graphic Design and Sign Making. Tables 3, 4, and 5 provide the outline of the internal analysis on which interview questions were based for Pride and the partner companies.

Process	Practice	Metrics	Enablers
Digital Video Production	**Initial Consultation**	budget (breakup)	software
		customer wants	hardware
		what they can afford	experience
		determine target audience	education
			quality
	Script Writing	Storyboarding, # of editors	facility
		constant client communication, types of available videos	availability
	Setting up scenes/Shooting	location, # of crewmembers, outsourcing	
		available equipment, hardware and software used	
	Editing and Post Production	# of editors, hardware, software	
	Delivery	media types, duplications	
	Time Line	time allotted for project or section of project	

Table 3: Process Metrics for Video Production

Process	Practice	Metrics	Enablers
Sign Making	**Initial Consultation**	budget (breakup), customer wants,	software
		what they can afford	hardware
		determine target audience	experience
			education
	Initial Design	# of people working with customer	quality
		team involvement, costs, philosophy	facility
		further development of audience	availability
	Redesign and Final Design	limited # of times, costs, software and hardware	
		graphical examples	
	Prototype of sign	# of designers, capabilities, software, hardware	
	Make of sign	outsourcing, tools, # of designers	
	Delivery and Installation	certification, license, record of projects,	
		customer feedback, continued support	
	Time Line	time allotted for project or part of project	

Table 4: Process Metrics for Sign Making

Process	Practice	Metrics	Enablers
Graphic Design	Initial Consultation	budget (breakup), customer wants,	software
		what they can afford	hardware
		determine target audience	experience
			education
	Initial Design	# of people working with customer	quality
		team involvement, costs, philosophy	facility
		further development of audience	availability
	Redesign and Final Design	limited # of times, costs, software and hardware	
		graphical examples	
	Prototype of Graphic Design	# of designers, capabilities, software, hardware	
	Design Construction	outsourcing, tools, # of designers	
	Delivery and Installation	certification, license, record of projects,	
		customer feedback, continued support	
	Time Line	time allotted for project or part of project	

Table 5: Process Metrics for Graphic Design

Each service will be considered as a process and a more in depth look at the

practices, metrics and enablers will be made to determine what makes each successful.

4.2.1 Pride's Processes and Metrics

Video Production is outsourced to Aaron Keyes. Video Production involves an

initial client consultation. This meeting is set up to determine what the client wants to

accomplish and what they expect from working with Pride. This meeting usually requires

one to two hours of time.

Once the initial consultation has taken place, Aaron and/or Ernie will sit down

and brainstorm, draft scripts and begin script writing. Tina Gaffney also assists on

creating the scripts, when she has time to volunteer. This can take multiple meetings,

because the philosophy of Pride's Video Production is to get a perfect script; which will

lead to easier editing and a better-finished product. Once the script has been developed and approved by the client, shooting for the project will begin.

Before any film or equipment is brought out, either Aaron and/or Ernie will do a site visit to determine the necessary crew, equipment and hardware needed to efficiently shoot the project. Once on the scene, backdrops will be set up where necessary. Once footage has been shot, the next practice is to edit the video.

Aaron performs every aspect of video editing. The first step is to edit the actual video. Once the video is formatted properly, any necessary graphic work will be performed. Next, he will sync the audio with the final video product. The audio could be music, narration or vocals from the scripting or consist of all three. The editing can take up to a month due to the backlog of Video Production projects, and editing that is continuously being done on the "Youth Unity" show.

Pride currently has a small recording studio where its show, "Youth Unity" is filmed. Although this space is available, it is limited due to its lack of blue screens or backdrops. Pride uses a Canon XL-1 video camera for shooting, a LAV microphone to capture any necessary audio and a Lowell Lighting Kit for lighting. Once the video has been shot, an Apple MacG4 933 MHz is used to edit the film. The software used is Final Cut Pro and Adobe Photoshop. For sound editing Aaron uses a program called Korg-Tritan LE. As far as certification of the Video Production team, Ernie Floyd has a bachelor's degree in Art from Holy Cross and Aaron has been certified from the Connecticut School of Broadcasting with an Associates Degree in Communication and Video Production.

Although money has been set aside in the budget for marketing each year, and its youth programs are advertised, Pride currently does not market their revenue generating services. The only advertising tool used for the services are word of mouth and a pamphlet detailing what Pride has to offer both educational and non-educational.

Sign Making is outsourced to Brian Holohan and Sunshine Sign. Sunshine Signs is a small company; Brian is the owner and the only employee. Brian has an associate's degree in Fine Arts. When a customer comes to Pride Productions for Sign Making, they will set up a meeting with Brian. The customer will give Brian an idea of what kind of sign they are looking for. It is possible that the customer may want work done in another language or they may already have a logo they want duplicated which can be done as well. Once Brian has an idea of what the customer is looking for he begins to make sketches to offer visual perspectives to himself and the client.

Next, Brian and the customer will draw up a budget and contract. The payment is broken up into two installments: a 50% deposit and the other 50% upon installment. The initial consultation and installation are free. The current prices he quotes are $15/in^2 (per square inch) for aluminum and neon sign work. The price is greater for electric signs. Brian is currently working on coming up with a quotable price for all signage that he offers. Once a payment plan has been agreed upon, a site visit and another meeting is set up.

In order to assess the type of job that needs to get done a site visit in which photographs of the location are taken and details are recorded, such as whether or not a crane is needed and how much installation equipment will be required. Brian also

consults with the customer when any marketing advice is needed to assist in the design process.

Preliminary sketches will then be finalized on a computer and then superimposed on the structure that the sign will be going on. This superimposed image is then presented to the customer, and if agreed upon, fabrication of the sign is started. He will use software such as Corel 8 to do the sketches.

None of the construction of the sign goes on in Pride Productions; all of it takes place in Brian's studio. Brian buys all the materials wholesale and then begins the building process. Any digital printing or neon bending is outsourced. The hardware he uses includes Ioline Sign Cutters, which is a computer controlled milling machine for Sign Making. Corel 8 actually interfaces directly with this milling machine, so the design that was finalized will not be altered from design to production. During the construction the customer will be of the progress of the project. After the sign is constructed the next step is installation.

If the job is too big for Sunshine Signs to do then he will outsource a crane, otherwise he will install himself at no additional charge. Upon installation, the customer will pay the other half of the budget and Brian and Pride will split those profits according to a previously established percentage breakdown. Sunshine Sign's advertisement tools are word of mouth, the yellow pages and a brief flyer describing his services. Due to the relationship with Pride, this flyer cannot be in association with Pride. Brian also cannot brand his company logo on any work done through Pride Productions.

Graphic Design is outsourced to J. Spirit Wolf Vega and his company DreamCatcherIT. As with the previous services, an initial consultation is the first step in

the process. Spirit Wolf meets with the customer to find out what they are looking for.

Initial sketches are developed during this initial meeting to provide direction to the

project. A budget is done up which stipulates that three payments will be made

throughout the project. An initial 33% will be put down before the completion of the

initial meeting, another 33% when the design is approved, and a final 33% when the

project is finished.

More meetings are held with the customer if necessary to develop a marketing

scheme for the Graphic Design. This is done with a team of 4 people: a web designer, a

graphics designer, a digital media producer, and database designer. When the final

design is approved, production gets underway in producing the product. From start to

finish the process takes about a month. The idea takes about a week to develop and about

3 weeks to develop a finished design.

The design is done mostly using computer software, which is the nature of

Graphic Design. The software used is Adobe Illustrator, Macromedia MX, and

Photoshop7. DreamCatcherIT also creates web pages. The designers have experience

and are certified in Internet Security Systems (ISS), Active Server Pages (ASP), Cold

Fusion, and A++.

Once the product is finished the customer reviews it and any minor changes are

made. For the websites that are developed, there is a free maintenance period of 60 days.

After that, a maintenance contract can be bought for $200 a month, or $2000 for the year.

This covers any small maintenance problems, but not a redesign of the website.

The only advertising tool that DreamCatcherIT uses is word of mouth. Currently

no labeling is included with their work, but may be in the future.

4.3   Benchmarking - Phase II Discovery

Phase II of the benchmarking process involves investigating how partner companies are organized and how your organization compares to them. This can be done in a few ways, either qualitatively or quantitatively. Focus will be made more on the qualitative comparison, and the organizational processes embraced by each company. However, quantitative comparisons will be looked at also.

In order to properly benchmark Pride against its partner companies, companies in Worcester, MA and Springfield, MA were selected. One Video Production company, Sign Making company, and Graphic Design company from each city was chosen. These partner companies will be used to benchmark Pride Productions. Interviews were conducted with all the companies and with each vendor associated with Pride to gain a better understanding of the processes undertaken within their organization.

Video Production Companies

Video Production at Company A is based out of East Longmeadow, MA. The Vice President of Sales and Marketing discussed the processes and organization of the company. Company A is a multimedia solutions company specializing in medical educational videos, financial services, training videos, and college and university view books.

The first step in its Video Production process is an initial client meeting. They sit down and discuss the desired accomplishments of the video, what media types will be used, who will watch it, number of copies to be generated, and request all available existing material on the client's business. Lots of questions are asked up front to avoid future problems and unnecessary spending.

The creative team, which consists of a producer, editor, graphic artist, programmer (if CD-ROM development), and the salesman responsible for the project, begins initial development of the project. Once the team has looked at project material and developed a script, a budget and price for the project is determined and a proposal is submitted to the client. Once the proposal is accepted, an initial payment of 35% of the balance is due before work will begin on the project.

The next step involves shooting the project. Before a shoot takes place the cameraman and/or producer visit the site to make sure it is amply powered, make sure there is efficient space, and check for lighting conditions. This information determines a checklist of necessary equipment to successfully and efficiently perform the shoot. The average time it takes to shoot a project is one day. Once the footage has been shot, the next step is to edit the film.

Editing is broken down into individual units. Different people do each aspect of production: video, audio, and programming. Editor's work on one job at a time until the project is complete. This can create a backlog, but it also allows the editors to immerse themselves into the work fully without distractions. A table is set up to determine who is working on what project and also provides a time line of where the project stands and how much time is required for completion. Graphic Design is being done simultaneously while editing is in progress. Video editing is done first, and then the designs are applied. Once this is complete, the final video cut is given to the audio editor to be worked on. The total process, from shooting to final cut, usually takes no longer than 4 weeks or 20 working days.

Company A has a 1,000 square foot video studio and a 1,000 square foot audio studio, which are connected by fiber optics. Having everything done under one roof allows for greater control in quality and time necessary to complete the project. This was stressed as a good selling point to clients, but also cautioned that a larger payroll produces a larger overhead.

Filming equipment used includes multiple Sony Digital Video cameras. All editing is done on two Avid systems. One system is based by itself, and the other system is an NT (network) based system. This system allows for much higher quality editing. Light Wave and Maya are used for 3-D graphics along with Adobe PhotoShop.   Most staff members have a bachelor's degree in Video Production.

Although they try to keep all of its services under one roof some are outsourced. Duplications in large quantity are outsourced to reduce project completion times. They will also outsource a filming crew whenever necessary, for example, if they are contracted for an underwater shoot. Company A markets themselves using tools such as a website, trade shows, Chamber of Commerce, and the yellow pages.

Video Production at Company B is based out of Grafton, MA. The President discussed the processes and organization of the company. They specialize in corporate and event services, providing footage for company websites, and filming weddings, graduations and parties.

The first step taken in the Video Production process is an initial client meeting. These meetings help to determine target audience, what it is the client wants to say, and gather information about their company. Once the initial meeting takes place, research

on the company is performed, to find out who their competitors are and to define why the clients company is better.

Next, scripting and storyboarding of the project is done if needed. Similar to Pride Productions, there is only one employee of the company and scripting relies heavily on outsourcing. He works in conjunction with two outsourced Graphic design artists to determine the script. All of them have a Bachelor's degree in communications. Once the script is complete, the next step is shooting the project.

Company B operates out of a 300 square foot facility. Most projects are shot on site but when studio shots are required, they must rent studio time. Before shooting a video, a site visit is conducted to determine any necessary equipment required to perform the task such as lighting, audio and backdrops. Once shooting is finished, 50% of the balance is due before any editing takes place. Although company B participates in the editing process, the two hired graphic artists handle most of the work. They use analog and non-linear editing systems to complete the editing process. Copy Write 3 CD is used for producing the audio. This program has thousands of sampled sounds and songs that can be integrated into the video. Mac based software such as Adobe Photo Shop and Graphity are used to produce and edit videos.

The entire process from consulting with the customer to the final cut takes an average of two and a half months. Once the project is complete, the final 50% of the balance is due before the client receives the final cut video. In the case of shooting events, an initial deposit is required to secure the services and the full balance is due the day of the event before any shooting takes place. Company B's advertising is based on word of mouth, Chamber Events, brochures and the yellow pages.

Signage Companies

Sign Making at Company C is based out of Springfield, MA; the director of marketing was interviewed and the structure of the company was discussed. They offer many different categories of signs: regulatory signs, road signs, overhead excursions and guide signs. In the past six years they have brought in $28 million in business with New York City and Atlantic City.

Due to the fact that the majority of jobs are standard directional signs approved by the Manual and Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), consultation is not always necessary. If a consultation takes place, marketing advice is given to target the proper audience and the estimating department develops a contract. There is no set payment schedule; it is determined based on the customer's history with the company and then put into the contract. Pricing is done by the pound, the higher the quantity the lower the price. This can be done because they are a manufacturing plant. The regulatory sign prices are listed on the company's website, which are set by national standards. They do not charge for designs either, unless a large amount of time is devoted. They have a design team within the company itself. They also bid on jobs, which allows them to get more work because of their low prices, which is due to the size of the manufacturing plant.

The sign is usually approved even before the Graphic Design work is done. If it is a traffic sign then it is already under the regulations of MUTCD, otherwise it is custom designed by a design team who has their work pre-approved. Some of the software they use for their work includes: ACT! (database), Flexi Pro, and SBS.

Materials are shipped to Company A from international sites such as Russia. They also have an Aldine tank, one of only two tanks in the country, which gives their signs an advantage over their competitors. Every piece of metal is chemically converted before being manufactured into a sign by being dipped and cured in the Aldine tank. This allows adhesives to adhere properly, which increases the durability of the sign. Signs can be manufactured in a variety of different languages including: Spanish, French and Hebrew.

Once the sign has been constructed, the next step is installation. Company B does not do any installation itself to avoid lawsuits; instead they outsource the job to an installation company. Besides installation, the only other things that are outsourced are: ball, embossed signs, or porcelain signs. They also sell blank signs to smaller sign companies who cannot manufacture on their own; currently 15,000 such companies are in their client database. They also provide a resale certificate so they can see what the companies are doing with their blanks and how much they are charging for them.

There is no set time period for finishing a sale. Each job varies due to the production schedule and availability of materials. Company C can accommodate a two day turn around time, but a $100 rush fee is applied. After the project is complete, constant contact with the customer is kept, to provide customer service and generate repeat business. They use a non-aggressive and non-evasive sales strategy; they feel like they have taken a different route by having a catch phrase: "Intelligent signs for life". The number one advertisement technique is through their website which was created with very little text and lots of signs (examples), this way the client does not get lost in a world of text. They also have a CD business card, with an overview of the company, to present

to potential clients. These innovative advertisement venues cost a lot of money, but have increased sales significantly.

Sign Making at Company D is based out Central, MA. The president touched base on the framework of the company. Company D specializes in large display signs for local Worcester businesses.

When a customer enquires about the company, the first step is to establish a relationship through the phone or salesman, and get an indication of what the customer needs. The salesman makes up an initial contract, and the contract is discussed with the customer. The budget is discussed in the contract, the first consultation is free and labor is $75 an hour. Therefore the contract generated is based solely on material costs.

Next, a site visit is set up to ensure any zoning issues are uncovered and to determine the size of the project and what equipment will be needed for installation. Once the contract is signed, an initial deposit is required, and then the rest of the payment is due at the end of the project.

If the contract is agreed upon, initial design starts, if needed. Some of the work is restoring and rebuilding existing designs. This is due to a great deal of repeat customers. Marketing advice is given to the customer depending upon what the company feels will bring in business. The work is done by two artists that work independently but consult each other whenever necessary, and a graphic artist. Some of the software used includes: Adobe Illustrator and Design Illustrator.   They have two professional artists on staff: one has a bachelor's degree in Graphic Arts from Rhode Island School of Design, the other graduated from Boston School of Arts.

The sign is superimposed on the building or structure they will reside upon and this is presented to the customer. After the design is approved, it goes into production. Seventy-five percent of the work is performed onsite, including the construction and wiring of the sign as well as the manufacturing of the material. They offer any type of sign except billboards due to their magnitude. Any other service that cannot be done is outsourced, such as graphics printed out for trailer trucks. Company D is capable of doing signs in different languages; translators are often outsourced to help in the process. They also work with a variety of materials such as: wood, hand painted gold leaf, aluminum, sand blasted wood signs, metal lexan or acrylic faces.

Labeling of the companies name is done by a small decal in the corner of the sign if permitted by the customer. They do, however, brand all the ends of the moldings that are made.

During the delivery and installation processes, responsibility for liabilities must be taken into account.   An engineer stamps all signs and if they are over a specific size, a permit is required. For delivery and installation of especially large signs, equipment, trucks, and cranes are available. The employees are certified to operate all this equipment. The amount of time the entire process takes cannot be adequately defined as it is custom to the job being done and the existing work load the company has.

Signs produced have a reputation for extreme durability and low maintenance. Protective measures are taken such as coating their steel with chemicals. On the chance of any problems, labor and service are free for one year under warranty. It is due to their impeccable service they have developed a stable reputation and find most of their

customers return for additional projects. Although they have a Yellow Page ad for advertisement purposes, it is their performance that is their number one marketing tool.

Graphic Designs Companies

Graphic Design at Company E is also based out of Central, MA. The president of the company was interviewed. They specialize in Graphic Design and digital media production for websites.

First, an initial client meeting is set up. This meeting is free, and a better idea of what the customer wants is determined. Budgets and payment schedules are discussed during this meeting. Due to the customization of each project, there are no specific prices. Instead, an individual quote is written up for every project. The payment breakdown is set up on a per customer per project basis. If it is a small project or a reliable returning client, there is no set schedule. If it is a larger project or a new client, then a payment schedule is discussed with the customer, but no set company policy exists.

Once the contract has been agreed upon, an initial design is produced. The design team consists of four people, three employees and one additional member who is outsourced. They specialize in photography, web development, and graphics. From this meeting, a clearer direction is set by the customer. This usually takes 1 to 2 weeks to complete before an additional meeting can be set up to present the customer with initial design. At this point, Company E often outsources marketing advice for the customer, to help come up with a design that will better market their client.

There is a redesign process set up to limit any waste of time and resources. The customer has 3 submissions, or 2 rounds, in which to change the design drastically.

After that only small changes will be made. If more changes are allowed, they feel the customer will end up changing the design back to the original.

The actual design is done on multiple platforms, PC based and Macintosh based. Different software packages used include Logo design, Photoshop, Quark Express, Adobe illustrator, and In-design (for page layouts). Any high-end editing or design work that cannot be performed is outsourced, but Company E will still take the project on and do as much of the initial design as possible. No one at Company E has a college degree, but they have been in the business for many years and rely heavily on their experience.

Once the design is finished it is presented to the customer. Labeling is done on all designs unless the customer declines permission. If the finished design is a web page, they can outsource a hosting company as well. There is a 45-day, free maintenance period for corrections to be made. This does not include redesign. Furthermore, a maintenance contract, after the initial 45 days, can be negotiated.

Currently the only source of advertising that Company E uses is word of mouth. The president of the company feels that advertising is something the company has lacked since its birth 2 years ago. A new marketing campaign is being initiated at the time of the interview to combat this problem.

Graphic Design at Company F is based out of Springfield, MA. A designer and consultant discussed the processes and organization of the company. They specialize in multiple media sources, and imitation wood sign carving.

First, an initial client meeting is set up to determine what the customer wants and what type of budget the customer is working with. A quote is drawn up and, if accepted, initial design work begins. The initial meeting is free, but after that they charge $50/

hour plus materials. For the quote a per customer payment process is set up, but again there is no set breakup.

Any original work is requested, although design specialists and Graphic designers can create logos also. Marketing advice is given to the client during this initial design period, to help the customer market their product or business more effectively. All initial design work is done onsite, except for neon signs, t-shirt screening, and digital printing, which are all outsourced.

All the design work is completed on Macintosh computers, although a PC based computer is there to import any designs from the customer. The main software package that is used Flexi Pro. Once the design work is done it is presented to the customer. Due to the customization of each project, the length of time to complete a project varies.

Web site design work that is done has free maintenance for anything that is broken; redesign requires a new contract. Hosting of the website is outsourced.

The company has three employees. One has a master's degree in Graphic Design including fifteen years of owning and operating a small business. The other employees both have a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts.

Company F's main sources of advertisement are their reputation and word of mouth. Most of their customers are repeats and they have a signature look to their graphics, so it's easy to tell what they have done.

This information has given us greater insight into Video Production, Sign Making, and Graphic Design. Comparing this information with Pride will allow us to perform the second Phase of our benchmarking process, Analysis.

4.4 Four P's Framework and Pride's Services

As discussed in Chapter two when developing a marketing plan, an understanding of the four P's framework is important. Figure 4 below illustrates the structure of the four P's framework and the variables that compose it. The four P's framework serves as guidance when developing a marketing plan by enabling a business or company to identify the flaws and successes in their product. Once a business has identified the areas that need work, they can start the redevelopment process.

Sign Making	Graphic Design	Video Production
Commerce Bank	Better Living Patio	Fleet Bank
Chamber of Commerce	Fearless	Worcester Public Schools
Boys and Girls Club (Worc.)		Youth Unity-Pride Productions
Commonwealth National Bank		Boys & Girls Club of Worcester
College of the Holy Cross		Grafton Street School
Worcester Centrum		New Balance Shoes
Kingdom Shooz		Worcester Vocational Schools
Kingdom Klothes		Bruce Wells Scholars
Tropic Sun Tanning		Breej Technologies
		Main South CDC Revitalization Project
		A-Records
		Tropic Sun Tanning
		Afro-Beauty
		UCALAA
		MAC
		Worcester Pipeline Collaborative
		Y.O.U. Inc.
		Clark University
		Holy Cross College
		Worcester State College

Table 6: Pride's Clients

Pride Productions offers a variety of services, they are as follows: Internet café, business facility rentals, Video Production, Sign Making, and Graphic Design. A current client list can be seen in Table 6.   In order to identify strengths and weakness of each service, a Four P's framework was constructed. "Today, marketing most commonly remains based on the Four P's. Despite its limitations and perhaps because of its simplicity, the use of this framework remains strong and many marketing textbooks have been organized around it" (www.netmba.com/marketing/mix/).

Figure 4: Four P's Framework (www.netMBA.com)

4.4.1 Internet cafe

Pride's Internet café is the first service that the four P's framework was constructed for. By starting with the first *P*, Product and going through the framework, the results can be better understood.

Product: Other venues with Internet access, such as Kinko's, do offer the use of computers and Internet; however, it is not an Internet Café. Pride's café consists of five computers with high-speed connections, fast download times and stable operation. People can come to the café to simply check their email, browse the web or utilize MS

Office Pro to create a presentation, or resume. Printing is also offered. Product

information for the Internet Café was obtained through brochures and fliers, currently

used by Pride as a marketing tool, and through discussions with staff members.

Price: Use of computers in Kinkos is three times the price that of Pride for an

extended period of time. For internet use, Kinkos charges six dollars for a half hour,

whereas Pride charges only two dollars for a half hour and printing is offered at five cents

a page. However Kinkos breaks their rates down to 20 cents a minute. Therefore Kinkos

is less expensive than Pride, up to 20 minutes. After that Pride is the cheaper service

provider. The price difference break down can be seen in detail in Figure 5. The rates

for the internet café were obtained from Ernie Floyd. The rates for Kinkos were obtained
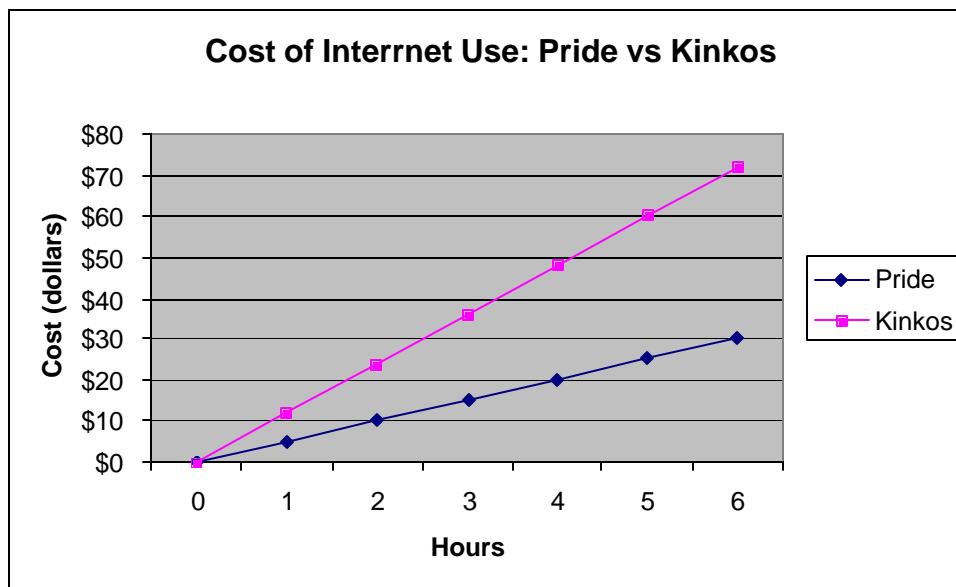
through Kinkos website (www.kinkos.com).

Figure 5: Price comparison chart: Pride vs. Kinkos

Place: Pride Productions is located downtown in the Worcester Common Outlets.

It is on the second floor of the mall, opposite to the food court. The Internet café is

located in the corner of the room.

Promotion: Currently Pride Productions uses brochures, signs and word of mouth as modes of advertisements. The brochures are handed to those who request information on Pride at the front desk and current customers. Signage hangs in front of Pride as a window display, but no pricing information is shown.

4.4.2 Facility Use

Pride Productions rents out the use of its facilities to local colleges and businesses. The following is the Four P's framework for facility rentals.

Product: Facility rentals are available to local businesses and colleges that would like to hold classes or meetings and have access to computers at the same time. If an organization rents Pride's facilities for a function they have access to seventeen networked computers, Internet, a laser jet printer, phones, an interactive whiteboard and a large conference table.

Price: Pride's goal is to serve the community with reasonable prices. Facility rentals come at a very practical price. The price varies depending on the size of the company and the amount of time the facility is rented for. Average pricing is twenty-five dollars an hour for small companies and fifty dollars an hour for larger companies.

Place: The facility rental is of Pride's space in the Worcester Outlet Mall. Unless the business or college renting the facility is within walking distance, access to the building incurs a parking fee.

Promotion: Current promotion strategies include brochures and word of mouth. Brochures are handed out upon request. Due to the fact that Pride's president has a variety of contacts, word of mouth is heavily utilized. According to Pride, current customers will also spread the word.

4.4.3 Video Production

Pride Productions offers Video Production services to generate revenue, which supports its youth programs, such as "Youth Unity."

Product: Video Production includes promotional videos, commercials, documentaries…etc. Consultation, site visits, scripting, and editing are all included. Pride offers non-linear editing, which means the projects are edited on high-powered, Mac-based systems. Videos can be done in any language that is requested.

Price: The pricing for Video Production varies depending on the project. The pricing can range anywhere from $1000 to $5000 dollars. Shooting is currently set at $100/hr and editing is $80/hr.

Place: The entire production process takes place at Pride except for on-location shooting.

Promotion: Currently the two methods of promotion are word of mouth and Youth Unity. Ernie Floyd has a lot of community ties that provides him with job opportunities. Their clients, such as Fleet Bank and Breej Technologies which can be seen in Table 6, have helped to spread Prides services and reputation by word of mouth. Their youth T.V. show, "Youth Unity", runs on community access television, which exposes Pride Productions and the type of youth services they provide.

From the benchmarking data, other Video Production companies such as Company A in Springfield, MA used samples of their work to advertise as well. Company A has a variety of promotional CD's they have done for colleges that they pass out to perspective clients.

4.4.4 Sign Making

Sign Making is a service provided by many companies statewide. Pride Productions offers Sign Making services to many local companies and businesses in the community such as Bank North and Commonwealth National Bank. Pride has a partnership with Brian Holohan who does the actual Sign Making; the profits are then split between the two. The four P's framework constructed for sign making will provide information to make recommendations necessary to promote this service.

Product: Pride deals with all types of signs, including neon signs, vehicle lettering, logo design, banners, air brush signs, window/glass graphics and poster design.

Price: Prices for Sign Making include fifteen dollars per square inch of aluminum or neon. Installation is free for smaller jobs, for the larger jobs cranes are outsourced.

Place: The Sign Making service is contracted out to Brian Holohan who does the actual sign work at his studio. Customers who use Pride Productions to produce signage can meet Brian at Pride to discuss project material; however, the actual construction is done at Brian's studio.

Promotion: The only method of promotion being used is word of mouth. From the benchmarking data, it is known that other sign making companies, such as Company C located in Springfield, MA, used the Internet as their number one method of advertisement. Repeat business is also heavily relied on at Company C. Taking an ad in the Yellow pages proved least useful for Company C.

4.4.5 Graphic Design

Pride Productions also offers Graphic Design service. Graphic Design services are done in partnership with another company, DreamCatcherIT. Ernie Floyd and

DreamCatcherIT president and owner, J. Spirit Wolf Vega, have a contract that lets them sub out certain services to each other, such as graphics and signs.

Product: Services include website design, logos, business cards (upon request), advertisements, DVD's & letter heads.

Price: Prices are below the industry standard. DreamCatcherIT and Pride Productions make it their mission to provide the community with the best and most affordable services.

Place: Graphic Design work is subbed out to J. Spirit Wolf Vega. All Graphic Design work is done either at Pride Productions or DreamCatcherIT.

Promotion: According to J. Spirit Wolf Vega, the number one promotional method being used for the Graphic Design portion is him (Graphic design analysis interview). In essence, through word of mouth he is making the community aware of Pride Productions and DreamCatcherIT.

4.4.6 Target market

 At present Pride is aiming to target everybody, with no focus on a specific type of business or group of people; they have no target market for any of their services.

4.5 Summary

The results obtained from this section have given insight into the *Video Production*, *Graphic Design* and *Sign Making* businesses and the different ways in which they can operate. Information is also known about Pride's additional non-educational services such as the Internet Café and facility rentals. As stated in the methodology, the main goal is to define the limitations and boundaries that Pride faces, how they compare to other companies offering the same services and a four P's framework analysis of their

each. By using research tools such as interviews and archival data the necessary

information to benchmark Pride Productions has been attained.

The physical and financial limitations Mr. Floyd feels are imposed on Pride

Productions due to their non-profit, tax-exempt status were discussed. Mr. Floyd's

insight on these restrictions and the Four P's Framework of Pride's non-educational

services offers valuable information to accurately perform the analysis of Pride

Productions. The benchmarking data consisted of measuring Pride with their "partners"

to give us guidelines for the upcoming analysis. The four P's framework of each service

highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of each service in the four different categories.

Having these detailed results on Pride Productions and how they function as an

organization and a business will help progress to the final goal in this project: the

marketing and management recommendations. Analysis of the collected data will work

as a framework for the recommendations, which can be found in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 Recommendations

5.1 General Overview

The following chapter contains recommendations based on the results presented in Chapter 4. We feel these recommendations will help Pride Productions generate new sources of revenue and improve the organization's reputation through quality multimedia production at Pride. The following sections will discuss the organization of the company, benchmarking recommendations, and recommendations for their marketing campaign.

5.2 Organization

Organization of a company, whether it is for a non-profit or for-profit, plays a fundamental role in the company's efficiency and success. In order for Pride Productions to keep focused on its mission, there must be a more solid organization to the company, both financially and structurally.

5.2.1 Financial Concerns

Budgeting is something that all companies must do, but non-profits must take this a step further. A budget for an organization like Pride must fulfill two requirements. First, donated resources or money must be used in the appropriate manner that it was donated for. Secondly, the company must be financially stable, with the ability to generate revenue or rely on funding to keep its doors open. (Herzlinger and Nitterhouse, 1994, 185) All companies must deal with the second requirement, but Pride must deal with both.

Fund accounting is used by non-profit organizations to address these two requirements. Fund accounting consists of separating all funds and what they are used for. Pride's budgets for the 2000, 2001, and 2002 fiscal years were reviewed. These

budgets are all in the fund accounting style and format, but are missing key requirements that fund accounting should include. This has raised some concerns with Pride's ability to budget itself correctly. For confidentiality reasons, these budgets have not been included in the report.

The first and most major concern is that all incoming funds are lumped into two categories: grants and donations, and Video Production services. However, Pride offers at least four additional services that generate substantial funding. The funds generated from these services need to be recorded and clearly separated. If a certain service's funds are lacking, and maintaining the service is costing more than it is bringing in, a better decision can be made to drop the service if the funds are being recorded and clearly separated.

This plays into the idea that companies are usually successful when they find their niche and specialize in one area. "An excessive number of funds results in inefficiency, undue complexity, and inflexibility." (Herzlinger and Nitterhouse, 1994, 186) Spreading a company too thin can sometimes have devastating results. Having a better understanding of what each service is generating will help to better strengthen the advertising and organization of Pride.

The other source of funding that Pride receives is through donations and grants from charities such as the Ronald McDonald House Fund. These donations should be accounted for as donated revenues, and should be managed separately in accordance to what they are being specifically donated for. What should not be included is any "donation" that is received from Pride's vendors. This 35% or 65%, which ever the case

may be, should be logged under what service it came from. However, it can still be looked upon as a donation to Pride.

> "Although a financial statement that combines the separate funds may, at times, be used to depict the financial situation of the organization as a whole, most organizations also present a separate balance sheet for each fund and a separate Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Fund Balances for each fund that earns revenues or incurs expenses" (Herzlinger and Nitterhouse, 1994, 186).

By combining all theses funds into one donation category, Pride is neglecting what funding is generated by each service. Companies should know what funding their services are providing. If a service is not doing well, then a decision can be made if the service should be continued. This limits Pride's ability, as explained above, and fund accounting should be fully implemented. This will enable Pride to make more informed financial decisions.

Another observation made while at Pride and from analysis of the financial records is that Pride is under the impression that, due to its non-profit status, it cannot make any profit. Based on research presented in Chapter 2, organizations such as Pride can make a profit, but just need to reinvest that money back into the company at the end of the year. This concept has been misunderstood at Pride, and further research into the subject area should be done. Pride should use any additional funds at the end of the year to make it more reputable and more advanced than competitors. This leftover money could be used for more advertisement of its educational programs or for funding of new educational programs such as Marketing by Design. From the financial records, it seems that money was allotted to different categories arbitrarily, to balance the expenses and revenue. Pride can still maintain a zero balance at the end of the year, but should revaluate their budgeting methods for zeroing out the budget.

5.2.2 Structural Concerns

To effectively run any business, a strong management structure must be set firmly into place. Based on observation and interviews, it is difficult to tell exactly what Pride's management structure is since all of the workers participating with Pride are outsourced or volunteers.

Another concern is the organization of board members that is required under the 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt and non-profit status. To efficiently run a non-profit organization this board is essential. The seven-member board Pride has listed seems to differ from the actual people involved with the company. From observations, Ernie and Spirit Wolf seem to be the primary board members that are directing Pride. The point of a board for the non-profit organization is to help with the mission and direction of the organization. Ernie should be sure that the board meets regularly and rely on their expertise to help develop Pride's education programs and overall organization. This will allow Pride to run in a more organized manner.

The amount of outsourcing Pride is dependent on is an concern. "What makes outsourcing attractive is that an outsider, by concentrating specialists and technology in its area of expertise, can frequently perform certain services as well or better, and usually more cheaply, than a company that performs these services only for itself"(Thomson and Strickland, 2002, 371). For example, Company A outsources duplications in large quantities because it can be done quicker by an outside source and frees up employees to work on new or additional projects. They do not, however, offer Video Production and outsource the entire project. Outsourcing can be beneficial to any company as long as it is not abused. Pride currently outsources every service that it offers which has

transformed the organization from a service provider into a brokerage firm. Once this has taken place, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain control of a company. "The danger of outsourcing is that a company can go overboard and hollow out its knowledge base and capabilities, leaving itself at the mercy of outside suppliers and short of the resource strengths to be the master of its own destiny" (Thomson and Strickland, 2002, 371).

Pride outsources all of its services with no form of quality control. Any vendor that performs work in association with Pride should have certain requirements that must be met in order to retain some of this control. For example, Pride should have a standardized checklist broken down into different phases of each project. This checklist should provide an outline of the timetable required to finish the job, projected cost as well as actual cost, and a payment schedule. Every time a phase has reached completion, Pride and the vendor should sign off and date the checklist before the next phase can begin. This will help maintain focus on the job at hand and keep both Pride and the vendor in constant communication. It will also help in determining future budgets and timetables of similar projects.

Also, a database should be kept to record all clients. For example, after a project has reached completion, a description should be made about the client. This list should include the work that has been done, price of the project and any future projects the client may have discussed through out the relationship. Over time, this will help to determine niches Pride has created in each of its services and provide potential repeat business. For example, mailing out a thank you letter after the completion of the job and also inquiring about future projects the client has specifically discussed will present the impression that

Pride appreciates the business relationship and the success of the companies they work for.

5.3 Recommendations from Benchmarking Analysis

To benchmark Pride, a Gap Analysis of each profitable service offered was performed (see Appendices M-R). A Gap Analysis is done to discover any significant differences in the methods used and overall results of performing a specific task. In this section, Phase II of the Gap Analysis, the discoveries will be discussed in greater detail and recommendations necessary to ensure the success of Pride and its services will be made. These recommendations will help to bridge the gaps that exist in project development, hardware/software, education/experience, payment methods and organization. To successfully benchmark a company, there are three necessary stages to follow: Phase I is analysis, Phase II is discovery, and Phase III is implementation. These Phases have been discussed in Chapter 3. Phases I and II of the Gap Analysis have been performed, but Phase III and the responsibility of implementing these recommendations will be left solely to Pride Productions.

Project Development

The following gaps were found in the project development of each service offered by Pride. Included are budgeting, project teams, sales teams and zoning issues.

The first major gap is with *budgeting*. The vendors associated with Graphic Design and Sign Making have the freedom to discuss the budget with the client during the initial client consultation. However, the Video Production vendor does not share the same liberty. Pride, specifically Ernie Floyd, formulates the budget for video production. All vendors associated with Pride should be granted the same responsibility,

otherwise they are not truly a vendor and there is little incentive to do business. This will place less responsibility on Mr. Floyd, allowing him to perform other functions such as grant applications and youth education programs.

DreamCatcherIT is the only service of the three that employs more than one person during production. Video Production and Sign Making both depend on one person. Both Video Production partners have multiple people working on the production and editing. Also, both of the partner companies interviewed for Sign Making have at least three graphic artists on staff. Relying on one person creates a heavy workload and can cause drastic time delays in the completion of a project.

Outsourcing should be considered for different parts of the Video Production project. Aaron Keyes would be the production manager, and could outsource the shooting. Script writing could be done in conjunction with Tina Gaffney, who actively participates in scripting Youth Unity. The 65% that Pride receives as a donation could be divided up to pay for these additional outsourced services.

For Sign Making, a Graphic design team should be established. One way to accomplish this is teaming with J. Spirit Wolf of DreamCatcherIT to help with the design process. This will allow team members to bounce ideas off of each other, expand on them, and present more creative designs to the client. It will also decrease the time required to complete the project.

Unless a service is requested from a walk-in client at Pride, vendors are required to solicit their own business. For companies who are already donating their services to Pride, there seems to be little incentive to offer a percentage of the revenue they have generated independently.

Pride Productions should have a salesperson that deals with clients for all of the services provided. He/she should understand design, build, install and legal implications of each service and promote them to generate business. The salesperson should deal directly with the customer and the design team. This will allow each vendor to concentrate on his or her projects while the salesperson is out recruiting more business. This position will also serve as the director of operations. Although this is currently Spirit Wolf's title, a vendor should not hold this position, due to lack of accountability.

Throughout our interview process, zoning issues were never mentioned by Sunshine but both partners brought it up. Dealing with zoning issues before the sign is designed will save money, by not having to redesign, and ensure the swift and legal completion of the project.

Sunshine Sign and Pride's salesperson should educate themselves on the zoning laws and permits required to install signs. These issues should be expressed to the client during the initial consultation to demonstrate Pride's competence within the industry.

Hardware/Software

Hardware and Software play a key role in the quality of the product being produced. The gap between Pride and interviewed partner companies is relatively small. However, two major gaps were found. The industry standard software for Sign Making is Flexi Pro, which Sunshine Sign does not use. Sunshine Sign should consider upgrading their software. Also, Pride has no access to an AVID non-linear editing system, which is the primary editing tool used for Video Production. Although shows like Youth Unity do not need to be edited on this system, when Pride gets larger projects, requiring high quality editing, the rental of an AVID system should be considered. This

provides more marketing power, advertising and promoting your work being produced on the #1 industry standards.

Education/Experience

All partner companies interviewed have a higher level of education in their field. These companies all have employees with a bachelor's degree while some had aspired to a master's degree. Having a higher educational background than competition is not a deal breaker. The vendors at Pride are all legitimate business owners with years of experience. DreamCatcherIT has over twenty years of experience. This should be expressed in the promotion of the service, stressing 20+ years in the business. To support itself, during the initial client consultation, Pride should offer a list of references of past clients who are happy with Pride's services. This cannot be done, however, until a database of clients has been established. Another way to combat this gap is to become proficient in other hardware/software programs, so that your customers have more of a choice when it comes to what they want out of the Video Production, i.e. the AVID system.

Also, Sunshine Sign isn't affiliated with any type of Sign Making association, and isn't UL certified. Sunshine should become UL certified and research any other certification necessary to legally run a signage company. Finally, consideration should be taken to join any sign makers associations; this will promote the validity of the company and provide additional advertisement.

Payment Methods and Schedule

Price is a key determinant in the decision making process when looking to buy a product. Pricing at Sunshine Sign does not follow any outline or guideline. After the initial consultation, the price is determined by an hourly wage. This can be dangerous while giving estimates due to any unforeseen problems that may arise throughout the design build process.

Besides website design, DreamCatcherIT does not standardize pricing. This is understandable due to the customization of Graphic Design. However, customers want to know some sort of price and no labor rates are set for Graphic Design.

A distinction could be made between labor rates and material costs, which will allow for an easier time estimating a project cost for the customer. Currently, Brian is developing costs for the square inch of material used to develop the custom made signs. A standard set of prices involving each service offered, at least for labor, should be developed and available to the customer. These rates should be quoted during the estimation and budget creation.

Another gap that exists is the maintenance and warranty for website design. One company offers a free warranty for a year, for any broken links to be fixed. Another company's warranty offers free basic changes for the initial 45 days, and then a pay by the change afterwards.

Research should be done to investigate how a longer warranty will affect sales. A longer warranty will not only be enticing to the customer but also build a reputation that Pride stands behind its work. Another aspect that should be incorporated into the maintenance is a pay as you need contract. Customers without the monthly insurance may

need something changed or fixed and shouldn't be required to pay a $200 base fee. This will accommodate the clients' needs and further build Pride's reputation of their services.

Currently, there is no set and thought-out payment plan at Pride. Some customers are told to pay one way, others another. Companies that we interviewed had a set multi-step payment method that ensured the company's time was not wasted. This allows the client to pay for the work as it is done and to follow the project's development. This type of payment schedule is important because there is no potential to lose money if a client drops the production.

Of all the companies interviewed, Company A seemed to have one of the best and most thought out payment methods. Adhering to something very similar would benefit and organize Pride. The plan that is used requires 30% of the budget upon acceptance of the proposal. The next 30% is due when the script is finalized. The next 20% is due at the end of the editing process. The final 10% is due upon delivery of the finished project. This breakdown allows for a consistent flow of money throughout the production process. If at any time a customer chooses to discontinue business with Pride, they can cut their losses.

Organization

Currently at Pride, there is no set and structured client list that has been put together. This can be very confusing when trying to figure out who has donated what, and who has been a past customer of Pride or its vendors. From interviews with other partner companies, a related theme surfaced; all companies use some sort of global company database to keep track of clients. Pride can record all donations this way too. Most of the companies interviewed used a database called ACT!, but any general

database would provide more structure to Pride. Also, an updated client list will lend itself as an advertising tool. Having a database of past and present clients will clearly define any niches Pride has developed over time for certain markets. A technology oriented company such as Pride should use a database to keep track of client information. Being able to keep in close contact with past customers for follow up projects will greatly increase the reputation of the organization and increase the funding that Pride receives from its vendors.

Promotion

Pride must also advertise these services. If Pride wants customers to use their company as a one stop multimedia solution center, then the community must know this venue exits. Budgeting for advertisement has been very vague in the financial records received from Pride. From observation and discussions with Ernie Floyd, Pride's advertisement has been mainly focused on their educational programs. To better appropriate and distinguish funds, advertising for both the educational services and the non-educational services should be done separately. Adequate funding should be used to advertise the services, as well as the youth programs. Currently, this is not the case. This misappropriation of funds has limited Pride and its ability to generate revenue through its services. Money should be set aside to advertise Pride's Sign Making, Video Production, and Graphic Design services independently from the youth programs.

Finally, the only form of advertisement used to promote these services is word of mouth, fliers and bulk e-mailing. The partner companies all used websites, and demo work that they have performed before, along with follow up calls looking for repeat business. Pride should develop a web page, in conjunction with DreamCatcherIT, linked

to its website for each vendor to post completed jobs. This will provide inquiring clients a visual reference of Pride's workmanship. Also, Pride advertises Graphic Design with black and white fliers. This method can be used not only to advertise the service available, but also to demonstrate its quality. High quality, color fliers should be made to promote the ability and quality of the graphic artist as well as to promote the service.

A target audience and marketing plan to reach this audience should be developed. Word of mouth as a sole advertising tool greatly reduces the efficiency of any marketing campaign. If growth within the organization is desired, a target audience must be established. Pride Productions is fully capable of producing high quality services to its clients, but unless it is recognized in the community, no one will walk in the door. Also, Pride should stop using SPAM as a mainstay of advertising. Some business will be generated from this burst e-mailing; but more business can be generated by developing a personal relationship with the target audience and advertising to them ethically and without nuisance. Also these e-mails may not get through to potential customers, due to blocking of SPAM email that is so prevalent in e-mail software.

5.4 Market Recommendations

The Four P's framework, for each of Pride's services, has provided a guideline to make recommendations on how to better market and advertise each. The opportunities for incorporating all four P's into a marketing plan are numerous. One may find, after studying the competition, which increasing or decreasing your price is likely to result in better profits for your business. In the case of Pride Productions, there are a variety of improvements that can be made in each field. Analysis of the four P's for each service: Internet café, facility rentals, Video Production, Sign Making and Graphic Design has

resulted in many recommendations; several are overlapping and apply to all of the services.

Product

When dealing with product it is important to describe the benefits and shortcomings of the goods or services from the customers' perspective. By doing this a business can better understand their customers needs and build a sense of loyalty and reliability amongst customers (http://www.sba.gov/gopher/Business-Development/Business-Initiatives-Education-Training/Marketing-Plan). For example, a special feature of the Internet café is the uniqueness of the product; there is no other "Internet café" in the city of Worcester. A shortcoming is: it is not highly visible to the customer. The recommendations to better all the products are made from the customers' perspective as well as Pride's best interest.

?   The Internet café needs one more printer, preferably in color. This should be an immediate addition due to the existing printer failing which results in dissatisfaction among the customers. A color printer also provides a wider range of service offered to the customers.

?   Consistently updating computer technology (i.e. software and capabilities) will encourage more people to rent Pride's facilities. Upgrading technology is a recommendation that can be used for all of the services. For example, for Video Production an AVID system should be rented and strong consideration should be made to purchasing one in the future.

? Hiring another vendor in video production for editing and scripting "Youth

Unity" will free up Aaron to work completely on revenue generating production

and ensure project completion in less time.

Price

When dealing with pricing issues, it is always important to understand the pricing

strategies of the competitors. This will determine how to price your product or service,

so that your prices are in line with competitors and industry averages. "The key to

success is to have a well-planned strategy, to establish your policies and to constantly

monitor prices and operating costs to ensure profits. Keep abreast of changes in the

marketplace because these changes can affect your bottom line"

(http://www.sba.gov/gopher/Business-Development/Business-Initiatives-Education-

Training/Marketing-Plan).

? Currently Internet café pricing is: $2.00 for 30 minutes and $5.00 for an hour.

This is an issue due to some customers getting angry because they feel it should

be $4.00 for an hour. As discussed before, quantity drives prices down. If a

customer purchases a greater amount of time, the price should decrease, not

increase.

? Breaking the price down into 10-minute intervals for the Internet café will be

beneficial to Pride. Some customers get very angry when they want to use the

computer for 10 minutes yet they still have to pay $2.00, which is the 30-minute

minimal fee. Pride's pricing is the lowest available based on their current

scheme, however, if a 10 minute rental fee is considered, Kinko's is cheaper.

Pride should think about using adaptive pricing in this situation, "Adaptive

pricing is when an organization alters its pricing to adapt to the competitor in some way" (Churchill, 1995, 424). Their competition, Kinko's, breaks their prices down minute by minute, thus it maybe beneficial to Pride to follow a similar pattern.

?   When researching other companies that offer facility rentals in Worcester, the only one found is the Martin Luther King Empowerment House. Their prices are much higher than Pride Productions. Pride seems to be using the "opportunistic pricing" method which is a pricing method that attracts customers by pricing their goods lower than the competition (Churchill, 1995, 424). Therefore, the only possibility to explore is whether the prices are too low. As mentioned in chapter two, price is relative to the market you're in and how the product is perceived in the public eye.

?   Having set rates that do not change from customer to customer, especially for a service such as Video Production would allow for easier budgeting, and a more dependable reputation within the Worcester community.

?   Charging for installation in the Sign Making field should be considered because it is a time consuming process. While it does provide an incentive to choose Pride's services over competitors, they need to be sure that they are making a profit on the project. If the free labor is more than the amount of work coming in then it may be wise to charge for the installation. "As a general rule, the price of a product must be high enough to cover the total cost of production, communications and channels of distribution" (Churchill, 1995, 420).

? For the Graphic Design service, website maintenance is free for 60 days, where as other companies, such as Company F, offer a one year warranty. DreamCatcherIT should consider raising the design price and offering the maintenance warranty longer. By offering additional maintenance you are standing behind your work, as well as developing a strong reputation.

Pride has the lowest prices for all of their services, which is an incentive for customers. The major concern with the low pricing is to ensure that the profit exceeds the expenses (http://www.sba.gov/gopher/Business-Development/Business-Initiatives-Education-Training/Marketing-Plan).

Place

The location of your business should be described from the customer's perspective. Describe its assets -- i.e., the convenience, whether or not public transportation is accessible, and the safety aspects--street lighting, well lit parking lot or facility, decor, etc. Location should be built around the customers (http://www.sba.gov/gopher/Business-Development/Business-Initiatives-Education-Training/Marketing-Plan).

? Expansion for the future should be considered for all of the services. However, given the current location in the mall it will be hard to expand as there may not be sufficient space and the future of the Common Outlets is questionable. When Pride is thinking about expansion, it would be wise to look into alternate locations. A service such as facility rentals will greatly benefit from a location change as the facility is currently opposite a food court, which means even with the door closed the noise level is undesirable.

Promotion

Developing a strategy that uses various media for promoting a business is the first step. By monitoring the different media and identifying those that most effectively promote the business, one can concentrate on developing material for these formats that clearly identifies the goods or services, its location and price (http://www.sba.gov/gopher/Business-Development/Business-Initiatives-Education-Training/Marketing-Plan). As obtained from all the staff interviews, word of mouth is the main advertisement tool being used. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the method of promotion chosen is heavily dependent on the scale of the budget. Therefore, a number of recommendations have been developed for Pride to increase its promotional strategies in a cost conscious manner.

?   In front of Pride, signs need to be brighter to attract more attention, this way when people are dining in the food court or walking by, they will be read by everyone. The main things to keep in mind when putting up an advertisement are: *attention, interest, desire* and *action*. For the case of this service the goal of the advertisement is to get the passersby aware of the product's name and features. (Churchill, 1995, 574).

?   Descriptions of all the services and their prices on the front window would be extremely helpful. For example: what is the Internet café, hours of operation and price list.

?   Adding signs in the malls that direct people, for example there is a sign for restrooms…etc, adding one for Internet café will raise awareness to the mall shoppers the opportunity to access the Internet.

? Fliers, brochures and signs distributed to hotels in the Worcester area, airport, train, and bus stations will notify travelers and tourists about a facility that offers computer and Internet access as well as a facility that could be used for a business conference. Right now any fliers used are too general combining youth programs and professional services all together. Pride needs to make specific, detailed brochures for each non-youth service and distribute them as discussed above. Also, Pride offers Graphic design and advertises this service through a black and white flier. Consideration should be made to use higher quality, color fliers that will display the ability of Pride's graphics team.

? Internet advertising has proven to be useful to partner companies interviewed. Pride Productions already has a website and they should have separate links for each of their services detailing important information (i.e. price, time).

? Video Production corporations, such as Company A, use examples of their work to advertise. A promotional CD is given to potential customers. Pride runs "Youth Unity", one of their programs that they shoot and edit, on Community Access channel; however this only exposes people to the youth perspective of Pride. What they need is a promotional CD or video that can show the customer their capabilities.

? Pride should list themselves under as many different categories in the Worcester Chamber of Commerce (WCC) directory as possible. When conducting a search to determine companies to benchmark, Video Production was the only service Pride was listed under. The other services listed in the WCC are Graphic Design, and Sign Making.

- ? Labeling the signs that have been done by Pride in association with Sunshine Sign will allow potential clients to inquire about the company who did the sign. "When an organization assigns a label to a product, it seeks to create associations between the label and a particular image" (Churchill, 1995, 367). Labeling can be used for Graphic design as well. Labeling web pages with both Pride and DreamCatcherIT is a good way to relate the image to the product and bring in new clients who were impressed by the work they saw on other projects.

- ? Periodical mail outs is a good way to keep in touch with old customers and generate new customers, especially for Sign Making and Graphic Design. Keeping constant contact with the customer is the key strategy for Company D; a Sign Making company that claims their customer base is almost entirely repeat business due to their good reputation and constant contact. Although Company D is much older than Pride, following some of their strategies will help them develop a reliable reputation and build a dependable client base.

- ? When customers come into the Pride facility, some examples of their work should be on display for the client to reference. For example, Company F, a Graphic Design company in Springfield, had albums that featured all the different business cards they had done.

Target Market

Pride Productions, as stated in Chapter 4, does not have a target market. In order to effectively utilize the results from the four P's framework, it is important that they identify their target market; they can do this through the process of market segmentation,

as discussed in Chapter 2. While it is significant to have customers outside the target market use Pride's products, they need a target audience to focus their marketing plan on.

5.5 Synopsis of Findings

Overall, Pride Productions needs to become much more organized and focused. Pride needs to communicate with the current board of directors more often. The purpose of the board is to provide direction for the company. The present condition of Pride's management structure and marketing plan is partially due to the inconsistent communication between board members and Mr. Floyd. Regular meetings should take place discussing Pride's budget, structure, marketing plan and current status to determine any necessary changes that need to be made. Key decision makers should pay regular attention to how implementation is preceding in order to focus attention on any difficulties and how to address them (Bryson, 1995, 167). Relying on the boards experience and expertise will enable Pride to make better management and marketing decisions.

Also, Pride needs to improve its budgeting and allocation plan for funding. The funding needs to be separated and organized. The budgets also need to be revised quarterly. Currently, there are no financial meetings within Pride, or its board of directors as a whole.   The budget needs to be constantly addressed, to see what funds can be directed where, and to ensure optimal use. Pride can no longer produce a budget and not update it throughout the year. If Pride is serious about educating the youth of Worcester, and providing additional services, budgeting must be taken more seriously by keeping tedious financial records.

Pride also needs to incorporate better incentives for its vendors, especially Brian Holohan. We see no incentive for Brian to use Pride's facilities, even for a meeting. There is no rational reason Brian should donate 65% of the project back to Pride, or even 35%, because he is using none of Pride's resources to produce the sign work that he provides. Furthermore, Brian cannot even advertise his company at Pride. Currently, the major incentive that Pride is giving its vendors is the ability to network together using their resources and facilities. For example, if Graphic designers are producing a webpage that contains a video, they can get a good deal from Pride's Video Production vendor. However, this can be done without Pride being a middleman. Pride has become a broker, and no longer a dedicated service provider. In order for the vendor program to work, Pride must offer a better incentive package than what is currently being presented. If Pride chooses to stay with vendors, then they must somehow develop a way to control the quality of their work as discussed in Chapter 5. After Pride becomes financially stable, re-evaluating totally outsourcing to vendors should strongly be considered.

Based on the data collected throughout the benchmarking process, the services offered by Pride, which are all outsourced, are reputable and good quality. In comparison to partner companies, the gaps found are relatively small and easy to close. The most notable gap observed was the lack of an organized client list. Currently, Pride depends on memory to keep track of its past clients. A more structured method must be used. A database such as ACT! will allow Pride to keep track of it clients.

Overall these services are not generating sufficient revenue due to the lack of an effective marketing plan. This is directly related to an inefficient management structure.

Pride currently has no organization to its management, which is due in part to out sourcing every aspect of its business.

Pride needs to hire, not outsource, a staff or person to manage Pride Productions other than the vendors currently involved with the organization. Having an employee that can perform administrative work, as well as manning the storefront at all times of business operation will help to reorganize the company. Although volunteers can compliment these functions, an employee is strongly recommended. That way there is accountability for each aspect of running the organization.

Finally, advertising for the services offered must be independent of the educational programs. Currently, the services that generate revenue are advertised along with the youth programs and multimedia clubhouse. Advertising for Pride Productions is done on TV through the Youth Unity show, but without mention of the revenue generating services.

5.6 Conclusion

If Pride follows through with these recommendations, they will be in a better situation to prosper and expand their youth programs. The most serious issue is the lack of a board of directors. This needs to be the number one priority. Pride Productions offers a great opportunity to learn about computer and media technology. The implementation of these recommendations will ensure that Pride Productions continues to educate Worcester's youth for years to come.

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Appendix A

Gap Analysis

Pride Productions

Essential Element	_Essential Element of Our Procedure_	_Comparable/Essential Element of Benchmarking Partner_	_Gap in Our Procedure_	_Action to be taken_

Appendix B
Pride Productions
Interview w/ Ernie Floyd

<u>Limitations & Boundaries</u>

What do you feel are your limitations (if any) with Pride's current equipment/ technology? If none, why?

1. No I don't feel there are any limitations because none of Pride's equipment has been used to its capacity. Right now all the stuff is only being used to 30% capacity.

Under 501 c 3 tax-exempt status, there must be at least one owner/incorporator, at least three directors, an appointed agent and at least three officers. Who serves these positions?

1.Owner: Ernie, *Directors*: J. Spirit Wolf Vega, *Agent*: Bruce Dillaire, *Officers*: Stephen King, Bill Mienhoffer, Steve Kalger

Do you feel limited by the low number of staff? If so, can an immediate change be made?

1. Yes, I feel somewhat limited by the low number of staff. What's being done is bringing on more vendors and companies to do work here

Is the current staff qualified and meeting all the needs?

1. The staff are all very qualified, the main issue is the low number of staff

Do you feel anyone is being overworked or under-worked? Why?

1. Yes, there are multiple people in the company who are being over worked or have too wide a range of responsibilities. Again this is a result of the number of staff available

If grants are not coming in as much as you would like, is there a backup plan? If so, what is it? How have you survived in the past?

1. The backup plan is just selling our services as we have always been doing. Pride has never been the recipient of state or federal funding, so we don't rely on government funding. The private grants we get like Ronald McDonald help us get equipment and those grants come in based on what we do. We can survive though with the private grants we receive as well as our services.

Are there any other recognized regulations or limitations that exist due to your non-profit status besides the 501c3?
1. No the 501c3 is the only recognized limitation because of our "non-profit" status.

What are the limits in accordance to the budget allotted for advertising and promotion?

1. Well, the amount of money allocated for advertising isn't that much. We rely heavily on word of mouth. And we get promotion through our work with the kids, such as our TV show being aired on local channels.

Do you foresee expansion in the near future? Are there any current plans to do so?

1. No, I don't really see any expansion anytime soon. If things really take off and there is a need for expansion then it will be done, but no immediate plans.

Where do you see yourself five years from now?

1. We see ourselves as leaders in teaching communication skills in Worcester. Of course accomplishing the main goal which is to benefit the children.

Appendix C

Ernie Floyd, President
Pride Productions

Financial Limitation

What benefits does the 501 c 3 tax-exempt status present to Pride Productions?
Ex. What can you write off as tax free? Funding, payroll, etc?

1. The number one benefit to being a non profit organization is that we can position ourselves to receive donations from various private organizations to support our overall mission

What limitations does the tax-exempt status place on Pride Productions? (compared to an organization that isn't under the 501 c 3?)

1. As far as Pride goes there is no benefit to being a for profit entity because our mission is community based (at risk youth) and for profit businesses like to give back to the community.

Do you feel there are any other benefits or limitations, besides the tax-exempt status, Pride Productions faces? Location, prices, services, etc…?

1. Our location is important because we can reach a wide selection of customers. We attract people from all over who enter the mall food court location. The services we offer are very limited in the community.

Appendix D

Aaron Keyes
1/29/03

Video Production Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis Pride

What process do you take when doing video productions for a client?
1. Initial meetings, brainstorming, script drafting, script writing, schedule shooting, shoot video & edit
2. Time depends totally on content

What certification/experience is involved in the production?
1. Experience and a degree in communications/video production or film school

What types of video production do you do i.e. commercial, promotional, television, documentary?
1. All of the above

Do you set up scenes? How do you go about that? What's involved?
1. We do not build sets. We set up backgrounds based on appearance

Is there consultation on scripting? How many people are involved with the customer?
1. Yes we work very closely with the customer to meet their scripting needs. We need to have the same vision. One or two people work with the customer

How many people consult the customer when developing the initial idea and plan?
1.One person: the producer

What lengths of scripting are available?
1. Any length the customer needs

What languages can be scripted?
1. Any language requested can be done, however the cost is more

What media types do you use, or can you accommodate from the customer?
1. All media types

How many editors do you have?
1 .Right now 1: Aaron, starting in February: none
What's the turn around time for example on a 5-6 minute video? Production and editing?
1. Approximately three weeks (based on workload, more or less time)

What are the prices for video production that you offer i.e. 1 minute commercial, 6 minute promotion video, 1 hour documentary?

1.50% up front %50 at completion
2. $100/hr to shoot
$80/hr to edit

What equipment do you use hardware and software?
1. VP: Canon XL-1, Edit: Apple MacG4 933 Light: Lowell Lighting kit, Audio: LAV mike

Do you do graphic and sound work with the video too? If so what equipment and software do you use for that?
1. Yes. See above

Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
1.No…the customer generally will tell you what they think, however a feedback form is a good idea

What's your number one advertisement tool?
1. Word of mouth

What do you think makes you stand out from other video production companies?
 1.Our relationship with the community

Sign Making Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis Pride

What process do you take when doing sign making for a client?
1. Photograph of location, meeting (consultation), talk about budget,
2. Payment done in 2 installments,
initial sight visit/consultation-free

Do you have a review team or a design redesign process?
1. Just Brian

What certification/experience is involved in the sign making?
1. Degree in Fine Arts (Associates)

What types of signage do you do?
1. Vehicle wraps, logo duplication, all types of signs

Do you outsource anything, and if so what?
1. Neon, cranes, digital printing

Do you consult the customer with marketing advice and design advice?
1. Yes (points in right direction)

What types of colors are you capable of, along with what type of material can you use?
1. No restriction on colors
Most commonly used material is aluminum (any material can be done)

Do you manufacture your material or is it bought then created into signs?
1. Buy wholesale

Do you install the signs?
1. Yes, for free!

What durability do your signs have?
1. They have strong durability (wind load)

What type of hardware and software do you use?
1. Ioline Sign Plotter and Corel 8

What sizes of signs do you offer?
1. All sizes

Do you have branding on your signs?

1. Yes (Brian's name) customer choice

Can you scan images to the sign?
1. Yes

Can you take Graphic design work and transfer that to the sign?
1. Yes (digital printing outsourced)

What languages can be put on the sign?
1. Any language so far Spanish has been done

Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
1. No

What's your number one advertisement tool?
1. Word of Mouth (flyers, intro letter, yellow page ads)

What do you think makes you stand out from other sign making companies?
1. Good Price….CREATIVITY

Appendix F

Graphic Design Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis Pride

What process do you take when doing Graphic design for a client?
1. Consultation (interview), sketches, final sketches, put into computer, graphics and final product

Do you have a review team or a design redesign process?
1. Yes, approximately 4 people on team, web designer, graphics, digital media and data basing

What certification/experience is involved in the Graphic design?
 1.Software programmers- ISS, ASP, Cold Fusion, A++ technology

Do you outsource anything, and if so what?
1. Yes, media production to PPI

Do you do marketing design for your graphics i.e. consulting with the customer and creating a target audience?
1. Yes

What types of colors are you capable of, along with what type of material can you use?
1. 2.11 million colors, 1 million website colors, materials are outsourced

What types of Graphic design do you offer? Web page, t-shirts, flyers, business cards etc.?
1. Web page, business cards, advertisements, DVD CD's

If you offer web pages, do you offer continuing support?
1. Yes we offer website maintenance

Do you help the client set up the web page, hosting? Content design as well?
What type of hardware and software do you use?
1. Yes. Hardware/software✍ outsourced

What is your pricing for Graphic design?
1. Below industry standard

What sizes of Graphic design do you offer?
1. Outsource signs (PPI)

Do you have branding on your Graphic design?
1. Not now, but there are plans for it in the future

Can you scan images for Graphic design?
1. Yes

What languages can be used in your Graphic design?
1. Basically any language, we outsource language translators

Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
1. Yes, we have a follow-up letter/questionnaire

What's your number one advertisement tool?
1. ME- my presence with customers

What do you think makes you stand out from other Graphic design companies?
 1. My passion to help others and make a difference

Video Production Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis

? What process do you take when doing video productions for a client?
1. what do you want to accomplish, cd, video, etc
2. checklist, said can give us a checklist(should call and ask)
3. what do you want the results to be, tells us how it will be used
4. who uses, high school kids or senior citizen
5. what kind of budget do you have
6. selling time, not material
7. selling production and programming time….this time determines your budget
8. mold a program to what client wants to accomplish, most times clients have no ideas what it will cost
9. how many copies do they want?
10. give us all the material that u have in print, power point, brochure, etc.
11. now can structure presentation for them
12. summary…….budget, audience, format (vcr,dvd,cd,etc)…lots of questions up front
13. if you don't lots of problems later
14. take all info on project and sit down with creative team
15. creative team consists of producer, script writer, editor, graphic artist, (programmer for cd work)
16. Team meets with client or sales person meets with client and relays message to creative team
17. Once creative team has looked at the project material and put together a budget, they come up with a price for the job
18. Next, get a signed commitment for the client and begin work on the script
19. build a script
20. five levels of sign off
21. once client reads the proposal and agrees with it, more than one version,
22. sign off, many are sent by e-mail, saves money and time
23. do shooting and have client there if possible to help direct you in the direction they are looking for show client a rough edit, show, make sure on the right track, and get another sign off
24. deliver to client
25. 35% on a purchase order, wont start a job without initial 35%
26. second 35% is due when script is presented,
27. 20% after editing is complete
28. last 10% due on delivery and completion
29. duplicates are available (outsourced)….good add on to do duplicates, label design, etc
30. VERY IMPORTANT to not wait until finished product to ask for money

?   What is the average time it takes to produce a 6 minute video from start to finish?
1. one day of shooting
2. from script writing to final edit, 4 weeks, 20 working days

?   What certification/experience is involved in the production?
1. most staff has graduate from video production schools
2. great way to get work is thru internships
3. free labor
4. gives students an idea of how working world works
5. get an idea how students work and potential hire them after they graduate

?   If you outsource, each person working on the project should sit down as part of creative team

?   What types of video production do you do i.e. commercial, promotional, television, documentary?
1. diverse market
2. business for 26 years
3. don't create programs and try to sell
4. custom develop programs with clients
5. medical fields
6. work with doctors on educational videos
7. college and university view books
8. financial services
9. training education and marketing
10. video, cd, web based
11. interactive kiosks (touch screen)
12. museums
13. hall of fames
14. Green Bay Packers
15. baseball hall of fame
16. learn something about market, develop capability within that market
17. build niches and expand on them
18. RATHER THAN TRY AND BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYBODY, YOU'RE MUCH BETTER OFF FOCUSING IN ON A PARTICULAR INDUSTRY THAT YOU LEARN WELL AND KNOW WELL

?   Do you set up scenes? How do you go about that? What's involved?
1. everything is done on site whenever possible
2. have their own video and audio studios (very professional)
3. controlling quality and time table is something that can be done better if everyone is under one roof, use that as a selling point, very fast turn around time
4. disadvantage is a large payroll, large overhead
5. staff on outside if need special work done, underwater shoots, etc
6. camera man or producer goes to site and check it out\
7. make sure amply power
8. no focal length room to shoot somewhere, saves you money
9. this lets you know what equipment you are going to need

10. if you don't use professionals to light it well, shoot it well, record it well, product wont be as effective
11. but, this also drives up your budget
12. this company is on the high end of the scale
13. Always try to maximize your margin if possible, without compromising quality

? What is the average length of the videos you produce?
1. 5-15 minutes long
2. marketing video longer than 8 minutes, u will lose your audience
3. 1 page of script narrated converts to 1 minute of video
4. often times narrators can be outsourced, save time and money

? What languages can be scripted?
1. outsource translations
2. must be careful, English translated to German takes 20% longer to say the German line, must be incorporated into initial shooting and filming
3. only valuable in international companies
4. must decide on translation, sub-titles, etc

? What media types do you use, or can you accommodate from the customer?
1. full supplier of any multi-media solution
2. multi-media solutions company

? How many editors do you have?
1. tends to be broken down into individual units
2. guy edits one job at a time
3. set up table who is doing what and where
4. staff meeting every Monday morning
5. production meeting after every staff meeting
6. discuss status of each project
7. graphic department working on graphics while editing is being done
8. once scripting is done, different departments are working simultaneously on the same project
9. try not to move on to another project until the one you are working on is complete
10. video done first, then given to audio guys
11. large enough company so different people do each element of production, video, audio, programming
12. teams meet also
13. producer, graphic artist, editor, salesman, programmer consist of team
14. producer runs the show

? What are the prices for video production that you offer i.e. 1 minute commercial, 6 minute promotion video, 1 hour documentary?
1. priced somewhere between $1,000 to $1,500 a minute
2. 5 minute video is $5,000
3. 5 minutes gone with the wind more expensive than some B movie
4. training not lots of editing or script writing
5. Videos range from $5,000 to $25,000 for a 10 minute video

6. can get sloppy with a 30 minute video, cant be as sloppy with a 5 minute video
7. more shit to pack in less time
8. tighter scripts, tighter videos, etc….

? What equipment do you use hardware and software?
1. digital video cameras (Sony)
2. two avid systems
3. photo shop for all Graphic design, most of their Graphic designers use photo shop
4. light wave and Maya for 3d graphic
5. cross platform editing, use Mac's for graphics
6. PC's in the office

? Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?

1. No, don't have a formal questionnaire
2. close enough to client to get the feedback, if unhappy have to fix
3. do make a point from the marketing of business side, send thank u letter for using business, please let us know any suggestions you may have
4. always thank them for an order when u get it and thank them for the work when u deliver it
5. not interested in a one time business relationship
6. always want to keep in touch to do business again
7. some creative people uncomfortable with a questionnaire, could get slammed
8. shows people you care, gives insight into how to improve your work
9. liked idea

? What's your number one advertisement tool?
1. website, tradeshows
2. international company
3. not much local work, more national
4. chamber of commerce
5. yellow page ads
6. direct mail
7. develop a list of potential clients based on what you've done in the past
8. create postcard
9. repeat mailing
10. one time mailings don't work
11. by the time 3rd mailing goes out, start generating responses, must stay on it though
12. one shot deals don't work

? What do you think makes you stand out from other video production companies?
1. experience in the markets they work in
2. can do all the "heavy lifting"

3. many companies don't have time to develop things
4. knowing your industry helps you get business cause they have confidents you can do it right
5. very strong graphics team
6. better quality than lower cost overhead
7. but, are people willing to pay for that
8. Hollywood quality, some people don't care about that though
9. attention to detail and quality

? What process do you take when doing video productions for a client?
1. depending on the size of the project
2. work independently or with free lancers
3. scripting
4. storyboarding
5. shooting
6. duplicating
7. audience
8. internal/external piece
9. web
10. gather as much info as possible about company then research it
11. find out who competitors are
12. find out what other companies are doing to promote it
13. why this company is better
14. many people he works with have good ideas in place already
15. who is doing music, voice over etc
16. 6 people usually uses for voice over
17. copy write 3 cd, wide variety of different types of music
18. used as enhancement throughout video

? Are you capable of writing music for videos?
1. no, it is outsourced

? What certification/experience is involved in the production?
1. 20 years experience
2. degree in communications
3. both freelancers have degrees in communications and work experience
4. his time can be better served acting as liaison with client while other dudes work on project

? What types of video production do you do i.e. commercial, promotional, television, documentary?
1. has funneled down to corporate and event services
2. corporate….getting footage on a company web site
3. salesperson can show big machines on their laptop
4. events
5. weddings, graduations, parties, etc
6. people still get married

? Do you set up scenes? How do you go about that? What's involved? What type of facilities do you use?
1. use what is available
2. lights, audio, backdrops, etc
3. rent out space for shooting
4. use 300 sq. ft. facilities to do voice over

5. rent space in Shrewsbury
6. most work is on site shooting
7. found niche in pharmaceutical market
? Is there consultation on scripting? How many people are involved with the customer?
1. 1 or 2 people working on the script
2. offer feedback if think they r going down the wrong path
3. final decision is theirs though
4. guide them thru by all means if they don't have a clue (as if this guy does)
5. 60% of the projects are this way
6. layout a rough script to get an idea of what they want to say
7. this makes video production quality better
? What lengths of scripting are available?
1. 1 hr 45 min wedding
2. less editing to a degree
3. no scripting involved
4. day unfolds for you and you catch it as it happens
? What languages can be scripted?
1. no, can't do it
2. haven't done it yet
? What media types do you use, or can you accommodate from the customer?
1. vhs, cd rom, dvd
2. not shot on this but customer gets it on these 3
? How many editors do you have?
1. this guy and 2 freelancers
2. analog editing system
3. non-linear editing system
4. work with individuals and companies
5. 2 vcr's, controllers, and special effects between the 2
6. sometimes uses the "freelancers" for more complicated stuff
? What's the turn around time for example on a 5-6 minute video? Production and editing?
1. if the client has no delays on their part
2. as short as 6 weeks
3. on average, 2-2.5 months
4. because customer imposes delays
5. editing differs on each project,   editing and production go hand in hand

? What equipment do you use hardware and software?
1. mostly Mac based
2. 85-90% of the time is Mac based software
3. photo shop, graphity,
4. freelancers have hardware stuff
5. avid is a premiere non-linear editing system and people equate that to better quality, he don't use it

6. he thinks software packages have come a long way, has no complaints with final cut systems from clients

? Do you do graphic and sound work with the video too? If so what equipment and software do you use for that?
1. most of what he's done, doesn't involve his own graphics
2. uses their own logos and images off website or whatever
3. random man, random man, this guy is a random man

? Do you have a payment plan?
1. corporate customers, proposal is generated,
2. average project runs from $3,000 to $6,000
3. 50% upon completion of shoot
4. 50% upon completion of project
5. larger ones go 30 upon acceptance, 30 ,40
6. events, take a deposit
7. balance before event takes place

? Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
1. no, we just instigated him to do that
2. said he's been lazy about that
3. good idea

? What's your number one advertisement tool?
1. word of mouth is good
2. chamber events
3. developing conversations with anyone he can talk to
4. not involved in any search engines
5. brochure to refer current customers to
6. yellow pages continues to amaze him with their drive
7. thinks he has advantage in yellow pages because of his name

? What do you think makes you stand out from other video production companies?
1. customer service
2. good relations with people
3. pharmaceutical company
4. over the course of 8 years with one company
5. 4 have left to start other companies or work somewhere else
6. still use him
7. competitive prices due to lack of huge overhead to support

Sign Making Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis

? Do you have a review team or a design redesign process?
1. no, signs are company specifically
2. Behr corp. , polymers division, thermoforms their signs, durability ….could beat with a baseball bat and not hurt it
3. manufacturing determined by automated equipment used, operations more than redesign no, because in their industry things are cast and designed for their
4. stop signs, MUTCD, Manual and Uniform Traffic Control Devices, which is a federal standard that determines all specifications of signs
? What certification/experience is involved in the sign making?
1. certified graphics specialists
2. certified in different graphics such as flexi-pro
3. project manager and estimator have been to school for drafting
4. safety….wind loads, weight loads
5. experience
6. members of ATSA, American Traffic Safety Association
7. two member marketing team are only two with college degrees

? What types of signage do you do?
1. regulatory signs
2. any signs seen on the road
3. overhead excursions
4. guide signs.3-4 million dollars per year
5. LED signs $12,000 a piece
6. sell aluminum blanks
7. New York- $28 million worth of business with New York City in past 6 years
8. Atlantic City
? Do you outsource anything, and if so what?
1. don't do ball or embossed, signs, porcelain signs
2. 90% of everything done here
3. other sign companies buy stuff from them
4. resell to a lot of companies-15,000 companies in database, provide resale certificate so they can see what they are doing with it
? Do you consult the customer with marketing advice and design advice?
1. yes, don't charge at all for Graphic design
2. what you call a design build firm
3. full graphics department

? What types of colors are you capable of, along with what type of material can you use?
    1. just about anything
    2. don't use wood
    3. doesn't last long
? Do you manufacture your material or is it bought then created into signs?
    1. raw material comes in and manufactured into signs
    2. get material from Russia, international sites etc
? Do you install the signs?
    1. no, other people install, avoid lawsuits
? What durability do your signs have?
    1. Aladine tank, one of only tanks in the country
    2. only one other, in the mid-west, competitor
    3. every piece of chemical cut is chemically converted before being manufactured into a sign
    4. dipped and cured in this tank
    5. allows adhesive to adhere properly

? What's your philosophy on signs, simple and strong or complicated and bold?
    1. simple and strong
    2. let sign do thinking for you
    3. complicated are extremely difficult to manufacture and install
    4. less means more
? What type of hardware and software do you use?
    1. ACT, flexi pro, SBS, software system
? What is your pricing for signs?
    1. by the #
    2. quantity drives cost down
    3. web site has regulatory prices (check it out)
    4. estimating department
    5. break it down piece by piece
    6. do bidding on jobs
    7. often get jobs this way because prices are so low due to size of manufacturing plant
? What sizes of signs do you offer?
    1. all sizes can be made since they are manufactured in-house
? What languages can be put on the sign?
    1. Spanish
    2. French
    3. English
    4. Hebrew
    5. program that translates just about everything
? Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
    1. constantly in touch for more business
? What's your number one advertisement tool?
    1. website

2. crated website with very little text
3. lots of signs
4. this way person does not get lost in a world of text
5. the web allows you to concentrate on interested customers rather than target a huge audience
? What do you think makes you stand out from other sign making companies?
1. gone off on different route
2. intelligent signs for life
3. non-aggressive and non-evasive sales pitch
4. no old school sales calls
5. telemarketing is not done here

Sign Making Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis

? What process do you take when doing sign making for a client?
1. establish relationship with customer through a salesman or phone in
2. site visit
3. use their logo or design/ create a new one
4. check out zoning
5. give digital picture of building or site with super imposed logo on picture
6. if regular customer, call on phone and go over the proposal
7. 75 years in business, good repeat customer base
8. FOR CHANGING LOGO
9. will provide the service to change logo
10. have 2 professional artists on staff
11. one graduated from Holy Cross, graphic arts degree from Rhode Island School of Design
12. one graduated from Boston School of Arts
13. Get an idea from customer what they want
14. upon consulting with customer, $75 per hour
15. most business is from repeat customers
16. often gain customers from people who have logos designed for business cards, but Graphic design wont work on sign, they fix it to work
17. MAINTENANCE
18. this is another type of client
19. provide service calls
20. everything new has a one year free labor and service warranty
21. 75% of the work performed is on site
22. build them
23. wire them
24. UL approved
25. qualified and fully licensed crane operators

? Do you have a review team or a design redesign process?
1. two artists work independently
2. consult each other when ever necessary
3. also work with graphic artist
4. final design done by computer graphic specialist
5. show superimposed designs on building
? What certification/experience is involved in the sign making?

? What types of signage do you do?
1. everything except for billboard
2. specialty signs are down by big companies like doing highway signs for example

3. banks,
4. 6 story high granite building signs
5. small bank teller signs(teller name on desk)
6. neon signs
? Do you outsource anything, and if so what?
1. outsource teller name signs
2. accept all jobs, outsource whatever can't be done
3. graphics printed out for trailer trucks
? Do you consult the customer with marketing advice and design advice?
1. yes, all the time
? What types of colors are you capable of, along with what type of material can you use?
1. wood
2. hand painted gold leaf
3. aluminum
4. sand blasted wood signs
5. metal
6. lexan or acrylic faces
7. no stone work
8. window graphics
? Do you manufacture your material or is it bought then created into signs?
1. buy material and manufacture it into signs
2. buy material on a need bases
? Do you install the signs?
1. yes
2. responsibility for liabilities
3. must be stamped by engineer if over a specific size
4. permit required
5. vehicles
? What durability do your signs have?
1. reputation for signs that last a long time without service
2. great work
3. lit up signs require more service
4. steel is treated with chemicals
5. lexan comes in sheets
? What type of hardware and software do you use?
1. photo shop
2. adobe Illustrator
3. design Illustrator
4. computers
5. color printer
6. decal machine
7. vinyl cutter…….30 inch
8. all hand crafted
? What sizes of signs do you offer?
1. anything up to bill boards….300 sq. ft. is biggest

? Do you have branding on your signs?
  1. very small decal on bottom sign
  2. on molding
  3. or on the bottom of pylon
  4. finds branding to be offensive
  5. pissed when car dealer puts decals on signs
  6. if client doesn't want it, wont do it
? Can you scan images to the sign?
  1. Yes
? Can you take Graphic design work and transfer that to the sign?
  1. Yes
? What languages can be put on the sign?
  1. only had one sign in another language
  2. had a teacher at Bancroft school translate from Spanish to English
  3. satellite trucks
  4. just apply graphics to signs for these trucks, no clue what they say but still do them
? Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
  1. constant personal relationships from customers
  2. people send in mail thanking for their work
  3. if people are upset, you will always hear about it
? What's your number one advertisement tool?
  1. reputation
  2. only advertise in yellow pages, don't even know if that is worth it
  3. web yellow pages, not enough people know about it to be involved in it
  4. redesigning website for people to find from any search engine
? What do you think makes you stand out from other sign making companies?
  1. reputation
  2. this business is mostly reputation and relationships with customers
  3. need to know what u are doing
  4. find clients and keep them
  5. good salesmanship
  6. legitimate sign companies that r licensed and insured and others who low ball

Graphic Design Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis

? What process do you take when doing Graphic design for a client?
  1. First step is budget determination, the initial consultation is free
  2. They have a payment breakdown depending on the customer they are dealing with, reliable customers, not as much; new client there will be a breakdown.
  3. Time frame: initial meetings
     a. 1-2 weeks
     b. scheduling key
     c. 1-2 weeks before you can show anything to them, then it depends on how many revisions.

? Do you have a review team or a design redesign process?
  1. No, we simply review the design with the customer: we have 3 submissions max, with 2 rounds to change the design….saves time and wasted effort

? What certification/experience is involved in the Graphic design?
  1. No college degrees, all experience. Photography, web development, and Graphic designer experience is pulled together. No certification.
  2. 3 person team, a 4th free lance person that helps as need be.

? Do you outsource anything, and if so what?
  1. Any high end video/graphic work they can outsource, but they will do as much or the initial design as possible.
  2. Communication b/w outsourcing people is key, and may be a pitfall unless noted and taken care of.

? Do you do marketing design for your graphics i.e. consulting with the customer and creating a target audience?
  1. No. They feel to do that effectively you need a marketing background. However, they do outsource this aspect out to a marketing firm.

? What types of colors are you capable of, along with what type of material can you use?
  1. Pretty much anything except wood, but that can be outsourced too.
? What types of Graphic design do you offer? Web page, t-shirts, flyers, business cards etc.?
  1. Logos, web sites, business cards, flyers, etc.

? If you offer web pages, do you offer continuing support?
  1. They outsource the hosting site, but they offer 45 free days of support. After that it's on a paid basis as need be, or a maintenance contract can be bought.

? Do you help the client set up the web page, hosting? Content design as well? What type of hardware and software do you use?
   1. All outsourced.
   2. Logo design, Photoshop, Quark Express, Adobe illustrator, In design -page layout

? What is your pricing for Graphic design?
   1. Feels that nothing can have a set price

? Do you have branding on your Graphic design?
   1. Yes they brand their work, but if the customer asks them not to they won't.

? Can you scan images for Graphic design?
   1. Yes they have this capability.

? What languages can be used in your Graphic design?
   1. Can be done but costs more money especially in the video aspect of their business. For graphics, fonts can be changed easily.

? Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?
   1. No, just customer relations.

? What's your number one advertisement tool?
   1. They don't have any advertisements tools other than word of mouth. Starting a new marketing campaign as we speak. They are a new company and feel they have lacked in this area.

? What do you think makes you stand out from other Graphic design companies?
   1. Good customer relations. Brought a lot of clients from previous jobs and life, but feel they need to do more.

Graphic Design Phase II Benchmark Process Analysis

? What process do you take when doing Graphic design for a client?
1. figure out what they want
        some know, some don't
2. discuss budget
3. don't over or under consult
each client is different
? Do you have a review team or a design redesign process?
1. 3 designers
all work individually and conjunctively
consult each other often
? What certification/experience is involved in the Graphic design?
1. 7 years experience
2. masters in Graphic design
3. 15 years experience, previously owned company
4. studying for BFA, bachelors of fine arts
? Do you outsource anything, and if so what?
1. printing is outsourced
2. design is done internally and printed at a wholesale regional printer
3. neon signs are manufactured somewhere else
4. t-shirts are printed somewhere else
? Do you do marketing design for your graphics i.e. consulting with the customer
and creating a target audience?
1. depends on the client, some request or require
some don't
? What types of colors are you capable of, along with what type of material can you
use?
1. pretty much match any colors
2. PMS colors
? What types of Graphic design do you offer? Web page, t-shirts, flyers, business
cards etc.?
1. all of the above
? If you offer web pages, do you offer continuing support?
1. yes
2.make necessary changes when necessary
fix anything broken
3. no outsourcing
4. provide all support

? Do you help the client set up the web page, hosting? Content design as well?
1. yes
? What type of hardware and software do you use?
1. Mac based

2. PC is used for financial purposes and printing out word files for clients with word documents

3. all Macs for Graphic design

4. flexi pro

? What is your pricing for Graphic design?

1. $50 per hour

2. set up fees for small orders, like business cards

? What sizes of Graphic design do you offer?

1. pretty much anything

2. install signs as well as design

3. site visits before designing signs

4. provide post mounted durable signs

? Do you have branding on your Graphic design?

1. no

people recognize their signs in the community

2. unique style (not lying, very nice and unique)

3. good strong materials

4. rarely use aluminum signs

NICE wooden signs

? Can you scan images for Graphic design?

1. of course

use digital cameras

refer to other people if cant handle big job……small company

? What languages can be used in your Graphic design?

1. Vietnamese, Chinese, German, Russian, Polish, anything really

? Do you have a customer feedback tool/form?

1. word of mouth

2. call people upon completion

3. call back/ repeat customers

4. referrals

? What's your number one advertisement tool?

1. don't advertise

2. do publication companies for business

3. do a banner for them and they place an ad

bartering

? What do you think makes you stand out from other Graphic design companies?

1. not just a Graphic design company

2. do everything based on your look, business, vision, etc

3. work with you and for you

4. more capabilities than just designing

Essential Element	Essential Element of Our Pride Productions	Comparable/Essential Element of Company C	Gap in Our Procedure	Action to be taken
Project development	Brainstorming, script drafting, script writing Shoot video and edit Initial Meetings	Discuss desired accomplishments, media types, budget, how will it be used, who will watch it, time required to produce determines the price, # of copies, request all available existing material, ask lots of questions up front to avoid future problems and unnecessary spending, Sit down with creative team consisting of producer, editor, graphic artist, programmer (if cd-rom development), and salesman. Once creative team has looked at project material and discussed a budget, a price can be determined. Submit proposal…Script is then written	1. No budgeting is discussed. This is done with Ernie, although the company that is producing the video is outsourced	1. All budgeting whether it is done through Pride or through Aaron should be done by Aaron. If he no longer works under Pride but rather is a vendor, this is a responsibility that Pride should not incur, but rather the vendor.
Shooting Project	Site visit Set up backgrounds based on appearance	Cameraman and/or producer check out shoot site, make sure amply powered, check lighting, make sure plenty of room to shoot, this determines equipment needed, average timeline is one day	1. None	1. None

Production	Aaron is the only editor employed by Pride Starting February first, no editors will be employed by Pride. Aaron does every aspect of editing, audio, video, graphics	Broken down into individual units, editors edit one job at a time until complete, set up table who is doing what, large enough company so different people do each aspect of production: video, audio and programming Graphic design in progress while editing is being done, video done first, then sound Staff meeting every Monday morning, production meeting after every staff meeting, discuss status of each project, this allows for different departments to work simultaneously on the same project, weekly team meetings consisting of producer, graphic artist, editor, programmer, salesman.	1. Only one person does the editing, although Ernie helps with the shoots. 2. No set staff meeting, but this is changing with Aaron	1. See about outsourcing the shooting and script writing to other vendors, so that multiple people can confer on the project. 2. Develop a set staff meeting amongst vendors involved in the production that can't be missed.
Pricing Payment Schedule	5 minute promotional video $1,000 to $5,000 50% up front 50% upon completion	Rule of thumb $1,000 to $5,000 a minute, depends on type of production (quality), videos range from $5,000 to $25,000 for a ten minute clip, Gone with the wind or a training video which requires little script writing or editing, 35% of balance on purchase order (won't start work on	1. Should possibly consider different payment plan to support ongoing project	1. Adopt a pricing plan, to ensure more profitability and also to ensure customer satisfaction.

		project until received) 35% is due upon script presentation 20% after editing is complete 10% due on delivery		
Time Frame	Average 3 weeks for a 6 minute video after shoot More or less depending on the work load	Start to finish 4 weeks maximum 20 working days from initial client consultation to delivery of final product shooting usually takes on day	1. More time required to finish product	1. Now that Aaron is a vendor this time scale should decrease a bit. Also consider getting another editor to help with just youth unity.
Hardware and software Certification Experience	VP: Canon XL-1 Edit: Apple MacG4 933 Light: Lowell Lighting Kit Audio: LAV microphone Certified from Connecticut School of Broadcasting Equivalent to an Associates	Sony Digital Video Camera 2 AVID Systems photo shop light wave and Maya for 3d graphics cross platform editing Mac based Most staff has a bachelors degree in Video Production Internships	1. No access to AVID system 2. Higher education specialization in field by partner	1. On higher end projects seek use of an AVID system rental. 2. Not much you can do here, maybe become certified in some more programs.
Outsourcing	Everything is now outsourced at Pride	Duplicates (large quantities) Filming Crew when necessary i.e. underwater shooting language translations	1. Less control over production and quality due to outsourcing.	1. Develop a checklist or a way to keep control over the vendors while allowing them to perform their services.

Types of Video Production	Commercial Promotional Television Documentary	Custom develop programs for clients Medical Educational Videos College and University View books Financial Services, training videos, Video, cd, web based, Interactive kiosk, museums, football hall of fame, baseball hall of fame, Green Bay Packers Build niches and expand on them	1. Have not developed a role in a specific market, still trying to find one.	1. Try and develop a better target audience that you are going to advertise to. Once you find your role with the video production industry you will have a much better stream of incoming donations to Pride.
In-House Studios	Small area to shoot "Youth Unity" Restricted to "Youth Unity" due to lack of blue screen	Video Studio (~1000 sq. ft.) Audio Studio (~1000 sq. ft.) Fiber optic cable connecting them Allows for control of quality and timetable when all work is done under same roof Fast turn around time Good selling point Larger payroll, larger overhead	1. Larger video studio, and audio studio 2. Faster turn around times for partner due to in-house studios	1. Look into the ability to rent a video studio and audio studio for shooting and voice recording. 2. Unless Pride moves their facility nothing can be done about this.
Advertisement Tools	Word of Mouth	Website, trade shows, Chamber of commerce Yellow pages	1. Only real source of advertisement is word of mouth.	1. Develop your target audience and then start advertising to them. Don't just rely on word of mouth it will only get you so far. Develop a website page through pride that customers can be referred to.

Appendix N Benchmarking of B

Essential Element	Essential Element of Our Procedure	Comparable/Essential Element of Benchmarking Partner	Gap in Our Procedure	Action to be taken
Project Development	Brainstorming, script drafting, script writing Shoot video and edit Initial Meetings	Determine audience, scripting, storyboarding, gather info about company and research it, find out who competitors are, how the clients company is better Only employee of company Works with 2 freelance graphic designers Uses 6 different people for narration Outsource many aspects of project	2. No budgeting is discussed. This is done with Ernie, although the company that is producing the video is outsourced	1. All budgeting whether it is done through Pride or through Aaron should be done by Aaron. If he no longer works under Pride but rather is a vendor, this is a responsibility that Pride should not incur, but rather the vendor.
Shooting Project	Site visit Set up backgrounds based on appearance	Use what is available Lights, audio, backdrops Rent out space for shooting Most shooting is on site Found niche in pharmaceutical market use 300 sq. ft. facilities to do voice over	1. None	1. None
Production	Aaron is the only editor employed by	Owner and two outsourced graphic artists	1. None	1. None

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	Pride Starting February first, no editors will be employed by Pride Aaron does every aspect of editing, audio, video, graphics	Analog editing systems Non-linear editing systems 2 vcr's, controllers, and special effects between the 2		

Pricing	5 minute promotional video $1,000 to $5,000
	$100/hr to shoot
	$80/hr to edit
	    50% up front
	    %50 at completion
		Average job runs between $3,000 and $6,000
		
		Smaller projects:
		50% upon completion of shoot
		50% upon completion of project
		Larger Projects:
		30% upon acceptance
		30% upon completion of shot
		30% upon completion of project
		Events:
		Take deposit
		Full balance due day of event before shooting occurs
			1. Not a very well developed payment plan.	1. Adopt a new pricing plan that both meets the customers needs and also ensures no loss of time and effort on Pride's and the vendors part.

Time Frame	Average 3 weeks for a 5 minute video More or less depending on the work load	If no delays: 5-6 minute video On average 2-2.5 months Because customer imposes delays	1. None	1. None

		Time is better served as a liaison with client while others work on project		
Certification/ Experience Hardware and software	VP: Canon XL-1 Edit: Apple MacG4 933 Final Cut Pro and Adobe Photoshop Korg-Tritan LE for sound Light: Lowell Lighting Kit Audio: LAV microphone Certified from Connecticut School of Broadcasting Associates in Communication and Video Production	20 years experience degree in communications both freelancers have degrees in communications Mac based, 85-90% of the time Photo shop, Graphity	1. None	1. None
Outsourcing	Everything is now outsourced at Pride	Just about everything is outsourced Does voice-overs and editing himself Often has outside help for that too	1. None	1. None
Types of Video Production	Commercial Promotional Television Documentary	Corporate and event services Providing footage for company websites i.e. salesman can show	1. None	1. None

		production line and machines on a laptop weddings, graduation, parties Found a nice role doing pharmaceutical videos		
In-House Studios	Small area to shoot "Youth Unity" Restricted to "Youth Unity" due to lack of blue screen	300 sq. ft. facility for voice-overs all other space is rented out or scenes are shot on location	1. No studio present to do shooting or voice over.	3. Look into the ability to rent a video studio and audio studio for shooting and voice recording.
Advertisement Tools	Word of Mouth	Word of mouth Chamber events Conversations with anyone that will listen Parents neighbor hired him No search engines Yellow pages (has amazing drive) Brochures	1. Only real source of advertisement is word of mouth.	1. Develop your target audience and then start advertising to them. Don't just rely on word of mouth it will only get you so far. Develop a website page through pride that customers can be referred to.

Appendix O Benchmarking of C

Essential Element	*Essential Element of Our Procedure*	*Comparable/Essential Element of Benchmarking Partner*	*Gap in Our Procedure*	*Action to be taken*
Project Development before any physical construction occurs	A Photograph of the location is taken. First meeting (consultation) is to talk about budget and what the design should develop into. Sketches are shown to the customer unless the customer wants a duplicated logo. The customer will indicate what direction he wants to go in based on the proposed ideas and sketches. Final sketches are approved by the customer, these sketches can be superimposed on whatever the sing is be attached too.	Not a lot of consultation because the majority of their sale come form standard directional signs approved by the MUTCD. Don't charge at all for graphic design, but also consults the customer with marketing advice if needed. They are what you call a design build firm, with a full graphics department. No charge for small graphic design, but for larger designs an additional charged is applied. Signs are either standard according to the MUTCD, or are custom design by their graphics team, who has the design approved.	1. No graphic design team, all done by one person	1. Develop a graphic design team for your marketing design work. Can be outsourced or part of Sunshine.
Construction and assembly of Sign	All materials can be used, mostly aluminum. All material is bought wholesale. Signs are branded with Brian's name if permitted by the client Signs can be done in different languages, done with software.	Raw material comes in and manufactured into signs; get material from Russia and international sites. Aladine tank, one of only tanks in the country only one other in the mid-west, which is a competitor. Every piece of metal cut is chemically converted before	1. Raw materials not used, must buy from wholesaler 2. Signs not treated	1. Not feasible 2. Either buy wholesale treated metals, or treat them by outsourcing them. This can be used as an advertisement advantage.

		being manufactured into a sign Dipped and cured in this tank allows adhesive to adhere properly. These languages can be signed. Spanish, French, English, Hebrew		
Delivery and Installation of the Sign	Installation is included for free Cranes can be outsourced if necessary Engineer approval can be acquired if needed.	No, other people install, avoid lawsuits that way. Have had incidents in the past.	1. None	1. None
Pricing	Initial consultation is free. After that money goes into time, materials…etc. Payment is done in two installments	Done by the pound. Quantity drives cost down. Web site has regulatory prices, which are standard set. Estimating department that develops all contracts. Do bidding on jobs too. Often get jobs this way because prices are so low due to size of manufacturing plant. Not low balling, just large facility able to compete greater with smaller sign companies No set payment schedule set. Done by customer, and according to contract.	1. Not producing high quantity, so prices are a bit higher 2. Estimations not done accurately	1. Not feasible 2. Develop better estimates, by developing labor rates and material rates.

Time Required	Varies due to the customization for each project.	Varies due to production schedule and availability of materials. Can accommodate a 2 day turn around time, but price increases then. Minimum $100 rush fee.	1. No set way/price to rush a project through development and construction	1. Allow for a rush fee to be accepted if customer needs product right away. Able to please customer, but also still being profitable.
Certification and/or Experience of Associates Hardware and software	Bachelors in Fine Arts (associates) Ioline Sign Plotter Correl 8	There is a certified graphics specialist who is certified in different graphics such as flexi-pro. Project manager and estimator have been to school for drafting, safety, wind loads, weight loads. Members of ATSA, American Traffic Safety Association Two member marketing team with college degrees in marketing. Software used: ACT (database), flexi pro, SBS, software system	1. Industry standard is flexi pro, which is not used 2. No management organization or project manager. 3. Not a member of any sign making association 4. Does not use ACT database	1. Learn Flexi Pro 2. Become more organized and have act like a project manager on the multiple projects you have go gin on. 3. Become a member of any organizations that deal with sign making 4. Use a database for you clients such as ACT.
Advertising tools and techniques	Word of Mouth Yellow Page Ad Intro Letter for potential customer	#1 is the website. Created website with very little text and lots of signs (examples). This way person does not get lost in a world of text. CD business card, with an overview of company. Feel like they have gone off on a different route, key catch phrase: "intelligent signs for life" They have a non-aggressive and non-evasive sales pitch.	1. No website is used 2. No advertising theme, and no 'catch phrase' 3. No interactive publication/CD to show customers previous work and information about company. 4. Constant contact with customers trying to get repeat business, or follow up work	1. Develop a website to recommend to customers 2. Develop your target audience and an advertising theme. 3. Same as #1 4. Keep in touch with past customers looking for follow up work. Develop your reputation.

		No old school sales calls; waits for customer to call back and say they want to do business. No feedback form but constantly in touch with customers for more business. Always trying to get follow up work.		
Outsourcing	Neon Digital printing Cranes customers	Don't do ball, embossed, or porcelain signs. 90% of everything done here Other sign companies buy sing blanks from them. Resell to a lot of companies- 15,000 companies in database. They provide a resale certificate so they can see what the companies are doing with their blanks.	1. Only design and end production done on site, no manufacturing is done.	1. Try and develop more methods of your sign making business so outsourcing isn't so heavily relied on.
What do they offer		No wood products are used. regulatory signs any signs seen on the road overhead excursions guide signs. 3-4 million dollars per year LED signs $12,000 a piece sell aluminum blanks New York- $28 million worth of business with New York City in past 6 years and Atlantic City		

Essential Element	*Essential Element of Our Procedure*	*Comparable/Essential Element of Benchmarking Partner*	*Gap in Our Procedure*	*Action to be taken*
Project Development- before any physical construction occurs	A Photograph of the location is taken. First meeting (consultation) is to talk about budget and what the design should develop into. Sketches are shown to the customer unless the customer wants a duplicated logo. The customer will indicate what direction he wants to go in based on the proposed ideas and sketches. Final sketches are approved by the customer; these sketches can be superimposed on whatever the sing is be attached too.	First contact is made through a salesman. Either a site visit is then set up, or for a smaller project a meeting is set up. The meeting is to help understand what the customer wants. Marketing advice is given to the customer dependent upon what the company feels will bring in business. The site visit is to ensure any zoning issues are uncovered first. An initial contract is made up by the salesman, and the contract is discussed with the customer. If an agreement is made initial design starts, if needed. Some of the work is restoring and rebuilding existing designs. If the customer wants logo work done, the company can either take the original logo or design a new logo on location with their graphic artists. Two artists work independently but consult each other when ever necessary. Graphic artist is also used. The final design is done by a computer graphic specialist and	1. No salesman consults the customer 2. Zoning issues are not considered 3. 3 artists are used to design the sign and artwork for logos. Only one used here.	1. Allow a salesperson who is knowledgeable about Pride's Sign making to promote and sell signs. 2. Become updated on zoning laws and permits required. Be knowledgeable about this to the customer. 3. Network with DreamCatcherIT or other artists/graphic designers to help with marketing design.

		shows superimposed designs to the customer for approval.		
Construction and assembly of Sign	All materials can be used, mostly aluminum. All material is bought wholesale. Signs are branded with Brian's name if permitted by the client Signs can be done in different languages, done with software.	75% of the work performed is on site. They build them and wire to them. Also material is manufactured on site into signs, or material/signs are bought on a needed base. Signs are branded with a small decal in the lower corner. If customer doesn't want one, they take it off. They do however brand all the ends of the molding that they do. They have a reputation for signs that last a long time without service too. The steel used is treated with chemicals. Can accommodate signs in other languages. Can bring in translators to aid in this process.	1. No capability of manufacturing on site. 2. Does not brand molding 3. Metal not treated with chemicals 4. Signs do not yet have the reputation for lasting a log time without service.	1. Not feasible 2. Brand any molding that you produce 3. Either buy wholesale treated metals, or treat them by outsourcing them. This can be used as an advertisement advantage. 4. Create your reputation for you work, visually & verbally.
Delivery and Installation of the Sign	Installation is included for free Cranes can be outsourced if necessary Engineer approval can be acquired if needed.	Responsibility for liabilities must be taken into account. The signs are stamped by an engineer, and if over a specific size a permit is required. They have special vehicles for this.	1. Must outsource installation equipment and vehicles. This will cause a charge for installation.	1. Not feasible, but become certified with UL installation.

Pricing	Initial consultation is free. After that money goes into time, materials…etc. Payment is done in two installments	After first consultation, which is free, labor is $75 an hour. So the contract that is generated only covers the material costs. Once the contract is signed, an initial deposit is required, and then the sum is due at the end of the work order.	1. Not a set rate for Labor. 2. Contract is hard to set at first, because exact labor and material pricing have not been set.	1. Develop a labor rate per hour. 2. Develop material costs to better develop an estimation
Time Required	Varies due to the customization for each project.	Varies due to the customization for each project.	1. None	1. None
Maintenance of Sign after installation	Yes	Provide service calls: Everything new has a one year free labor and service warranty. Frequent checking of signs in area done by associates.	1. Not pro active about maintenance, has routine check ups on signs.	1. Take a set day throughout the week to visit recent sites. This will show customers that you care, and allow you to catch problems before calls are made.
Certification Experience of Associates Hardware and Software	Bachelors in Fine Arts (associates) Ioline Sign Plotter Correl 8	Have 2 professional artists on Staff: graphic arts degree from Rhode Island School of Design, one graduated from Boston School of Arts. The company is UL certified for the signs they make too. They also have qualified and certified crane operators to install the signs. photo shop -adobe Illustrator	1. Not UL certified 2. No decal machine 3. No experience in software other than Correl 8.	1. Become UL certified 2. Try and develop more knowledge of software including Flexi-Pro.

		-design Illustrator -decal machine -vinyl cutter…….30 inch		
Advertising tools and techniques	Word of Mouth Yellow Page Ad Intro Letter for potential customers	Most of the business they do is repeat customers. They have a good reputation; have been around for 75 years. Only advertise in yellow pages, don't even know if that is worth it. Web yellow pages, not enough people know about it to be involved in it. Redesigning website. Constant personal relationships are maintained, mailing are sent thanking for their business. Sign companies that are licensed and insured are better then thoughts that low ball the prices.	1. Reputation not as well known 2. No website, no samples to show customers at pride, he could refer them to a website 3. No mailings are sent to customer, to gain repeat business	1. Develop reputation verbally & visually 2. Create a sample album detailing past work that you have done. Develop a website through Pride Productions…refer customers to this. 3. Do mailings to past customers, see if more work is needed or can be done.
Outsourcing	Neon Digital printing Cranes	Outsource teller name signs but accept all jobs except billboards. Outsource whatever can't be done, such as graphics printed out for trailer trucks.	1. Has to outsource too much because the company is small.	1. Try and develop more methods of your sign making business so outsourcing isn't so heavily relied on.

What do they offer		Everything except for billboards. Specialty signs are done by big companies like Whitco doing highway signs for example. Banks, 6 story high granite building signs mall bank teller signs(teller name on desk) neon signs Able to work with: Wood, hand painted gold leaf, aluminum, sand blasted wood signs, metal lexan or acrylic faces, no stone work, window graphics		

Essential Element	Essential Element of Our Procedure	Comparable/Essential Element of Benchmarking Partner	Gap in Our Procedure	Action to be taken
Project Development	Client fills out questionnaire Interview what the customer wants Sketches on sight Discuss budget (flexible) Takes preliminary sketches and if OK then makes them more finalized The final sketch is put into the computer and professionally done	A meeting is set to help understand what the customer wants. Discuss budget. The contract is discussed with the customer. If an agreement is made initial design starts. Different ideas are done up.	1. None	1. None
Certification and/or Experience of Associates	Illustrator, Macromedia MX, Photoshop7 Software programmers-ISS, ASP, Cold Fusion, A++ technology	Logo design, Photoshop, Quark Express, Adobe illustrator, In design -page layout. No college degrees, all experience. Photography, web development, and graphic designer experience are pulled together. No certification. 3 person team, a 4th free lance person that helps as need be.	1. Not as much experience in 3-d graphics	1. Develop this area more
Pricing Payment Schedule	New Companies:3 web pages, $2,500-no form of visuals logos designed & included	First consultation is free Nothing has a set price Worked out with customer, usually payment is in installments throughout the	1. None	1. None

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	Established Companies: Data basing Photography 6-8 page finished project $10-$15k based on extensive data basing required may be as high as 20K initial deposits$175-$500 pays for 1 yr hosting and domain name 3 installments of 1/3 the balance 1st due when 2 designs are seen (choose from) 2nd halfway thru completion 3rd before dot com name is transferred to company (ownership)	process		
Time Required	The process takes approx. 1 month	1-2 weeks before you can even show anything to them. After that depending on how busy they are…	1. None	1. None
Maintenance of website	Website support is offered 60 days free $200/month OR $2,000/year	They outsource the hosting site, but they offer 45 free days of support. After that it's on a paid basis as need be, or a maintenance contract can be	1. Doesn't allow for a pay as you need method.	1. Set up a pay as you need contract a well, because some people only need a small thing changed, they don't need a month of maintenance.

		bought		
Outsourcing	Language translators Materials for colors	Any high end video/graphic work they can outsource, but they will do as much or the initial design as possible	1. None	1. None
Advertising tools and techniques	Word of mouth Digital media Visual media Press releases cold call sales direct mailings (every 3 months) burst e-mail	Word of mouth	1. None	1.None

Appendix R Benchmarking of F

Essential Element	Essential Element of Our Procedure	Comparable/Essential Element of Benchmarking Partner	Gap in Our Procedure	Action to be taken
Project Development	Client fills out questionnaire Interview what the customer wants Sketches on sight Discuss budget (flexible) Takes preliminary sketches and if OK then makes them more finalized The final sketch is put into the computer and professionally done	A meeting is held to understand what the customer wants and to discuss their budget. Decide on new or current logo(s). The contract is discussed with the customer. If an agreement is made initial design starts. Different ideas are done up. The initial idea comes to life as the design is professionally done on the Mac.	1. None	1. None
Certification and/or Experience of Associates	Illustrator, Macromedia MX, Photoshop7 Software programmers-ISS, ASP, Cold Fusion, A++ technology	Flexi-pro Adobe Photoshop Bachelors of fine arts masters in graphic design 7 years experience 15 years experience, previously owned company	1. Not as high of an education specialization in field.	1. Since no further education can feasible be gained, stress in your advertising that you have X amount of years experience.
Pricing Payment Schedule	New Companies:3 web pages, $2,500-no form of visuals logos designed & included Established Companies: Data basing Photography	After first consultation, which is free, labor is $50 an hour. So the contract that is generated only covers the material costs. Worked out with customer, usually payment is in installments throughout the process	1. No set labor rates for services besides website design	1. Should create a standard set of prices involving each service offered, at least for labor.

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	6-8 page finished project $10-$15k based on extensive data basing required may be as high as 20K initial deposits$175-$500 pays for 1 yr hosting and domain name 3 installments of 1/3 the balance 1st due when 2 designs are seen (choose from) 2nd halfway thru completion 3rd before dot com name is transferred to company (ownership)			
Time Required	The process takes approx. 1 month	Varies due to the customization for each project.	1. None	1. None
Maintenance of website	Website support is offered 60 days free $200/month OR $2,000/year	Initial necessary changes are made for 1 year. Disabled links, Html coding done wrong, Errors, Bugs all will be fixed One year warranty Maintenance fee after that	1. less warranty than partner company	1. Investigate if longer warranty effects selling/obtaining jobs 2. may or may not depending on difference in overall price of project

Outsourcing	Language translators Materials for colors	Printing T-Shirt screening Neon signs	1. None	1. None
Advertising tools and techniques	Word of mouth Digital media Visual media Press releases cold call sales direct mailings (every 3 months) burst e-mail	word of mouth call people upon completion call back/ repeat customers referrals	1. Does not call people back looking for repeat business	1. Stop SPAM and be more personal, by calling people back and keeping in touch with them.