

The logo consists of the word "PODS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, each letter contained within a red rectangular box. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the top right of the "S" box.

PODS

The text is centered on a blue background with horizontal white stripes. The word "PODS" is in a large, white, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, "MOVING & STORAGE" is in a slightly smaller, white, bold, sans-serif font.

PODS
MOVING & STORAGE

The text is centered on the blue striped background. It is in a white, bold, sans-serif font.

STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN FOR
2021-2023

The text is centered on a white background strip. It is in a black, bold, sans-serif font.

“HERE TO GET YOU MOVING”

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Executive Summary

Portable On Demand Storage, or PODS, has been delivering remarkable services via containerized moves since 1998. PODS has dedicated themselves both professionally and personally to providing American, Canadian, English and Australian citizens with a joyful and smooth moving experience. Recently, a trend has been discovered; the 18-35 age group has seen a decline in sales as they may not be aware of the PODS brand or they'd rather move by themselves or with the help from family and friends. In order to reverse this trend in sales and create further awareness, research was conducted and a comprehensive marketing plan was constructed to grab the attention of the targeted market and to create a strong customer base. The introduction of 'Here to Get You Moving' will capture the essence of PODS' brand values to promote PODS as the preferred moving and storage company.



Situational Analysis

Company Background

PODS is a dependable moving and storage service founded on November 10, 1998. They focus primarily on containerized moves and also provide labored moves and long-period storage services. The billion-dollar company, headquartered in Clearwater, Florida, was founded by Peter Warhurst, who later left the company and sold the business to Arcapita (Gulf News Daily) for \$451 million in 2007. In 2012, PODS assigned University of Virginia graduate, John Koch, as the new president of the company.

Operating in major cities such as New York, Calgary, Sydney and more, PODS has opened their business up to millions of new customers. Today, their customers within these areas of operations, have the ability to get a quote or be directed to a company in the area that PODS is partnered with in order to create the best customer experience possible.

Product History

Quickly realizing the need for transportation of storage, Warhurst was inspired to create the "Podzilla", a hydraulic lift system designed to lift and transport pods easily without the use of a ramp. The effectiveness of this invention led their competitors, such as U-Haul and U-Pack, to come up with the U-Box and the ReloCube respectively. Since then, PODS has been able to customize their pods into several different sizes, with professional moving teams available, depending on the needs and abilities of the customer.

SWOT

A SWOT analysis was conducted by reviewing secondary research in order to evaluate the current standing of PODS, as well as its competitors. Looking into PODS' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats will display which dimensions of the company can be enhanced and refined. This will enable the building of a well-defined image that will provide PODS with a clear path into the future.

Strengths

While PODS has many strong attributes as a market leader in the moving and public storage industry, they currently stand out due to their experience with contactless service. Due to the current health concerns brought to the forefront of consumer's minds, being socially conscious of these concerns is an area where PODS can excel. PODS prides themselves on providing a flexible moving experience, allowing consumers to stay safe and healthy by limiting interaction between PODS employees and their customers. Through contactless service, PODS appeals to Generation Z (Gen Z) and Millennials by providing ease of use and flexibility. Gen Z wants to know their needs are being addressed specifically in a way that appeals to them, rather than being treated as one-size fits all (Forbes, 2018). PODS draws potential customers in through



their experience as a contactless service and by engaging these generations' unique values. Additionally, PODS employs simple branding to be seen as a higher quality service. PODS' sleek, white moving and storage containers adorned with their clean-cut logo demonstrates the company's quality by focusing on sharing their name instead of flashy, gimmicky advertising to attract people's attention. PODS stands out in its simplicity, elevating their brand above the competition.

Weaknesses

Although PODS appears as a high quality service, several factors keep them from appealing to the target market. Currently, PODS' brand position is aimed at established families. Fifty-six percent of Millennials have no children, with only 42% being married currently (Fry, 2020). With such a limited number of established families in PODS' target market, PODS does not appeal well to potential consumers due to the lack of container sizes. Families require larger containers, but for younger generations where typically only an individual may be moving, the lack of options in container sizes is a large deterrent. Another disadvantage of PODS' appeal to consumers is their lack of transparency which ties into their non-user friendly interface on their website. Overall, PODS' website is not easy to navigate with many tabs, subtabs, wordy pages, and the lack of a search navigation feature. Gen Z thrives on the internet and digital world and prefers transparency, whether that be about price and convenience or brand authenticity (Forbes, 2018).

Opportunities

While the overall market for domestic moves is shrinking, the portion of movers using containerized moves has been increasing over the past five years (PODS, 2020). This trend is expected to continue as more young professionals look to start their careers. PODS is uniquely situated to serve the Gen Z and Millennial generations as they provide a high level of customization and flexibility that adapts to their customer's needs. These younger age cohorts look for businesses that are willing to fit into their specific needs rather than force them into generalized products or services (Weise & Wuebben, 2019). Reaching this target market is especially important now as an increasing number of young adults are moving back into their parents homes, increasing the demand for services to aid consumers in beginning their own lives (Fry, 2020). With PODS being a leader in the largest share of the moving market (PODS, 2020), a large pool of potential consumers that have previously used PODS' service to refer to their younger friends and families to use the same services that they have.

Threats

The overall decline in the number of domestic moves from 2015-2018 poses a potential hazard for PODS in the coming years. According to the case, hundreds of households are beginning to stay in their current homes rather than move. New containers are also being patented by competitors to gain their edge and push back against PODS' dominance. These trends could lead to a stagnation of PODS' ability to lead the market. While looking to specifically expand PODS' influence to a younger market, one major problem is the lack of space that potential customers will have. Fewer consumers in the targeted demographic are living in spaces that will have the capability to use one of PODS' containers for extended periods of time. Young adults are continuing to move to urban areas where PODS does not provide its services. The final and most pertinent threat PODS faces is the growing economic uncertainty that is brought with the



coronavirus pandemic. Government enforced shutdowns and other regulations leading to many people working from home, moves will continue to decline as employers begin to allow their workers to work remotely, rather than being on site to complete their work.

*See Appendix for full SWOT infographic

Target Market

The target market for PODS is Gen Z: 18-24-year-olds, college students and young adults, and Millennials: 25-35-year-olds, mature young adults. Gen Z and Millennials are crucial for PODS to target as they will make up the primary target in the future. Gen Z is a generation who enjoys their individuality and has been used to undertake tasks on their own while Millennials are a group of technologically savvy individuals who have thrived in the internet age and take pride in forming new technology and new ideas. Both generations flourish in originality while undertaking their tasks upon their own shoulders, often forsaking assistance, instead favoring a "do it themselves" attitude. While they may seek individuality, they also favor simplicity and ease to reach their goals, as well as value a brand they can trust. PODS can capitalize on this through the use of social media and by presenting high morals to these vital groups of people (Weise & Wueben, 2019).

Competitive Analysis

U-Haul

U-Haul is viewed as a primary rival to PODS. While both PODS and U-Haul are competitors in the moving industry, they cater to their clientele in different manners. Currently, U-Haul is a strong leader in the moving industry segment of renting trucks/equipment. This segment has seen a slight increase in market shifts from 59% to 59.4% in recent years, growing the already majority segment (PODS, 2020) of the moving industry. U-Haul has been able to appeal to consumers through its flexibility, allowing movers to move on their own. Giving consumers the flexibility they seek, U-Haul appeals to Gen Z and Millennials' sense of independence. U-Haul has over 20,000 locations across the United States and has focused on creating tools that make their services easier for their customers to use, such as trucks which are lower to the ground and "College Boxes" used to appeal to younger consumers. Capitalizing on this want of independence through individual flexibility, U-Haul has avoided many hassles of the actual moving process services while catering to ideals younger consumers want. Besides appealing to Gen Z and Millennials' natures, one competitive advantage U-Haul has is their lower cost and upfront pricing that is easy for consumers to both understand and afford. By combining upfront pricing, flexibility, and unique services that ease the moving process for their customers, U-Haul has created a unique brand that draws customers in (U-Haul, 2020).

Zippy Shell

Zippy Shell, founded in 2007 in Australia, has quickly grown in the moving and storage industry. Zippy Shell Incorporated is now based out of Georgetown, Washington, D.C. and follows a motto of keeping things simple. Zippy Shell ships customers a container to fill which can then be either stored or shipped to a new location for easy moving. This simplicity appeals to their customers, and is specifically attractive to Gen Z and Millennials, by being open and upfront in their services. This simplified service and transparency keeps customers informed and allows users to have a sense of independence, as they make moving decisions (Zippy Shell, 2020).



Zippy Shell is seen as a threat to PODS as it appeals strongly to the target market PODS is still working to gain a foothold in – Gen Z and Millennials. One way Zippy Shell has been able to make an impression with younger generations is through frequent promotions which reduce or remove fees for added services such as unpacking and packing. These promotions entice younger generations to look into Zippy Shell and then secure their business by making their services more affordable to the group of consumers who traditionally have limited income.

U-Pack

U-Pack is a moving and storage company that caters to all fifty U.S. states, Canada, and Puerto Rico, providing flexible moving options with upfront pricing information. U-Pack provides a wide variety of trailers and containers, called ReloCubes, in multiple sizes to cater to customer's specific size allotment needs. This wide variety of available moving systems provides customizability to customer's moves (U-Pack)

Customizability is a value held by Gen Z and Millennials as it allows them to be in control and meet their specific needs. U-Pack attracts customers through its user friendly interface and pricing quotes. By being honest and open with potential customers, U-Pack creates an appealing impression to the values of Millennials. By being easy to understand and offering instant online quotes, the company appeals to Gen Z, who appreciate fast information and easy to use interfaces that allow them to complete tasks primarily independently (U-Pack, 2020).

United

United poses a threat by providing an all in one moving experience including packing, unpacking, storage, and debris removal (Unitedvanlines, 2020). United markets themselves as being able to provide local and long distance full service moves. Founded in 1928, the company arranged return shipments for independent moving companies under the name Return Loads Services before fully establishing themselves as United Van Service and distinctively developing their place in the moving industry. Today, United has become a cooperative using their years of experience to cater to consumers through taking all the pressure of moving on themselves.

Consumer Insights

Age and Gender

The target market demographic for PODS, 18 to 35 years old, is over 76 million individuals (marketingcharts, 2020), about 51% of which are women, who are also becoming the primary recipients of college degrees; at 41% vs 36% of men who have graduated from college.

Ethnicity

Almost 50% of the 18-35 year old target market is made up of individuals who are minorities, making these demographics more ethnically diverse than any previous generations of Americans. (Brooking.edu, 2020)

Education and Occupation

Over a quarter of PODS' target market lives at home with their parents, don't work, and don't go to school. This will greatly hinder these young adults' ability to afford to move, let alone hire a moving service.



Household and Marital Status

It is becoming increasingly common for young adults within the target market to move back in with their parents (Fry, 2020) after they complete their post-secondary schooling. As of 2014, less than 20% of young adults have been married, and have ranked it lower on a list of major life goals than becoming financially independent and moving away from their parents after college.

Finances

Among the 94% of the young adults who still live at home with parents, their yearly income falls below \$30,000 a year and 4.7% make between \$30,000 and \$60,000 a year. Of those who do live on their own, still greater 75% of them do not make more than \$30,000.

Market Research

Goal

PODS is a multi-national moving and storage company in a very competitive industry. Offering support to families and individuals progressing through life, has PODS destined to succeed by offering their products/services to as many consumers as possible. The goal of this research was to better understand Gen Z and Millennials brand loyalty, research habits, and the desires of the two generations.

Research Methods

Primary research was conducted through two surveys and a focus group to better understand the consumer behavior of the target market. The surveys were constructed to include a total of 35 questions. However, due to display logic, the maximum number of questions a respondent answered was 20. This survey was sent to 2,500 local students ages 18-22. This survey was also posted to Amazon MTurk, a crowdsourcing website used to gain data. The use of MTurk expanded the sample size and allowed for additional data that reinforced the research points. Primary research proceeded with a focus group consisting of members from the local American Marketing Association chapter. This focus group consisted of 11 people. The main objectives for the focus group were to understand purchasing habits of the targeted market, causes of stress when moving, and brand awareness within the industry. The questions were formatted to be open-ended, providing respondents with the ability to go into detail with their answers and allowed us to string questions together. In order to protect primary research participants' privacy, no personal identifying information was collected via survey or focus group.

Data Analysis

Brand Recognition

According to the student and MTurk surveys, the most well-known moving company was U-Haul. Thirty-one percent of respondents have heard of U-Haul. PODS had an awareness of 19%, which was the same for Penske and Two Men and a Truck. United was the least known company with 11% awareness. Awareness in a competitive industry can determine whether a company is successful or not. PODS lacks awareness compared to U-Haul, Two Men and a Truck, and Penske. Through the 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan, PODS will be able to increase their awareness to lessen the gap between themselves and PODS' competition.



Moving Experiences

Within the surveys, respondents were asked the following questions:

- Have you moved in the past 5 years?
- Rank the experience with X company on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best experience.
- How likely are you to use this company again on a scale of very unlikely to very likely?

As shown in Figure 2, 75% of the respondents have moved in the past 5 years with a majority using U-Haul, 52.79%. Roughly 27% of the respondents have also moved themselves to save money and due to lack of belongings. Only 4.99% of the respondents have experienced PODS' services. Two Men and a Truck had 7.04% of users, while United had 7.33% and Penske had 0.59%. When rating their experiences with the company they used, respondents were to slide a bar across to the value they wanted, scaled from 1 to 10, rounded to the nearest whole number. The averages of those responses were then calculated, as shown in Figure 3, and found that U-Haul had the highest average at 8.02. Of the five companies tested, PODS finished low in regards to experience with 6.53 as an average rating. Two Men and a Truck and United were very similar with Two Men and a Truck having an average of 7.27 and United having an average of 7.57. Referring to how likely a company was to be used again, as shown in Figure 6, on a scale of 1 to 5, U-Haul led the industry with an average rating of 4. PODS had an average rating of 3.33, placing them behind U-Haul, United and Two Men and a Truck.

The Stress of Moving

When thinking about the process of moving, many are immediately stressed. Respondents were asked to rate how stressful the moving process is on a scale of 1-10, 1 being not stressful at all and 10 being extremely stressful. Similar to how the company experience question was posed, respondents were asked to slide a bar to their desired value rounded to the nearest whole number. These scores were calculated and on average, Gen Z and Millennials rated the stress of moving a 6.63 out of 10. Eliminating stress is an opportunity for PODS to increase sales. The main cause of stress was the packing process. Multiple respondents raised concerns about forgetting to pack something. PODS can eliminate this by offering labeled boxes for each room in the house, along with a checklist of items frequently packed in moves which could provide some structure for people to know what to pack. By implementing these processes, PODS will become a more reliable company for consumers to use and not have to stress.

Social Media Usage

When it comes to the usage of social media amongst Gen Z and Millennials, Instagram is the most commonly used, with 33% of respondents using the application. Snapchat was a close second with 25% of the sample using the app, and Twitter being the least used at 10%. Facebook and TikTok were both lower than expected at 18% and 14%, respectively. Gen Z and Millennials are frequent users on social media platforms. By creating an approachable account on these popular social media platforms, PODS' brand can be infused into the minds of these two generations. Consumers are often likely to purchase something after seeing the product/service multiple times. In fact, "the optimal number of exposures of a brand to a person is 10" simplified and approachable accounts on social media platforms can implement this (Sumiga, 2017).

The Future of Moving

Within the surveys it was asked if respondents were likely to move within the next 5 years, and if so, where would they move between three options: Locally (in state), Nationally (out of state), and Globally (out of country). Seventy-three percent of respondents said they plan on moving within the next 5 years. Fifty-eight percent of this sample wants to stay in state, while 38% wants to get out of the state they're currently in.



Gen Z and Millennial Desires

A mere 4% of Gen Z and Millennials want to leave the country. With 73% of the target market wanting to move in the next 5 years, this is a major opportunity for PODS to flip the curve of sales towards an incline in the future. PODS can increase its market by approaching these consumers who will be looking for a moving company soon.

Consumer behavior and understanding the customer's wants and needs is vital to a successful business strategy. Respondents ranked qualities in moving companies of what is most important to them, with 1 meaning most important and 4 meaning least important. These four qualities included: timeliness to move, packing/unpacking services, accessibility, and the ability to drive your own belongings. Respondents agreed that timeliness to move was most important with an average score of 2. Packing/unpacking services, as well as being able to drive your own belongings, were deemed not important to consumers as they had average scores of 2.81 and 2.79, respectively. Accessibility had an average score of 2.40. This is vital information for PODS as they possess the two most important qualities. Timeliness, or the ability to move at one's own pace is most important to consumers and often a reason why consumers choose to move themselves. However, with PODS' ability to have consumers purchase a pod for individual months gives consumers the ability to move at one's own pace. PODS offers great accessibility as they can drop the pod off right in one's driveway. Forty percent of the sample ranked this as the most important quality. The least important quality to these consumers is packing/unpacking services with 21% stating it's their most important quality. Accessibility had 23% of the respondents say it was their most important quality within a moving company.

Focus Group Data

When conducting the focus group, it was made clear to those participating that if they wished to not answer a question they didn't have to answer. The first qualitative question asked to the participants was to describe their research habits. Participants were put in a scenario where they were 22 or 23 years old, just got a new job, and now had to move. It was asked, "what is your initial research topic and where will you go to find this answer?" Research trends appeared immediately as everyone in the focus groups brought up that "price of X moving company" was their first search. Google dominated when it came to where they would find the information they needed. As a secondary option to Google, participants brought up the idea of asking their network: family, friends, coworkers, etc. if they have moved and with what company. Many participants discussed that packing/unpacking services was deemed unnecessary to a point for their generation. They discussed how they know people that would be willing to help them move in and out of their living spaces. However, when the idea of not having help was brought up, they claimed it would be very beneficial to them and a price of \$100/hr. was deemed worthy for the services being provided. Participants all agreed that they would like their belongings to arrive at the same time they do. Respondents claimed that they didn't want their belongings to arrive separately from them. Other concerns for the participants were the causes of stress. Packing belongings and ensuring the safety of belongings were two key contributors to stress while moving. Participants claimed they always feel they are forgetting something or realize they've packed too much when they can't fit everything into a truck or container.

Insights & Actions

From the qualitative and quantitative research collected, a conclusion can be drawn that U-Haul leads most of the industry due to U-Haul being the most well-known and, in most cases, the only company known within Gen Z and Millennials. Within these generations, it was found that the most important quality to them



is to have a packing/unpacking service provided by the moving company. Many participants stated they were willing to pay an extra \$100/hr. for these services. This is something to be aware of as a company that does not currently have the same brand awareness as other competitors within the market to lure consumers to use PODS.

Conclusions & Recommendations

In conclusion, the data shows that PODS lacks the awareness needed to compete with other competitors. Consumers within the target market find packing/unpacking services to be most important to them when searching for a moving company to use. Within these demographics Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook are the social media outlets consumers use most often.

It is recommended that PODS make their website very simplistic for this demographic to use by clearly stating the services provided, the price of the move and the different types of products they offer. When this demographic does its research, they aren't looking to click through websites to find their information; they want it to be clearly stated with little effort on their part. PODS should also focus its campaigns to the social media outlets of Instagram and Facebook to capture the majority of Gen Z and Millennial consumers. Through these campaigns, PODS needs to get word out about the company and attract the percent of participants that have moved themselves. This group of participants is a large percentage of the sample. By using social media, PODS can increase their customer base and the brand's awareness.

Strategy, Positioning, & Objectives

Plan A

Evaluating the market situation of PODS is key to understanding the positioning that the company will need to take going forward to better reach the target market of 18-35 year old consumers. In an optimistic outlook of the potential COVID-19 recovery, the vaccine would be available by January of 2021. Under this timeline, PODS would begin its campaigns in order to build awareness among the younger Gen Z segment of the target market. This awareness would be measured through website traffic for PODS.com. The goal would be to increase this by 24% by the end of the 3 year campaign, starting at 800,000 website visits per month and increasing to 1,000,000 website visits per month. The tactics used would also focus on Gen Z in the first year then shift towards gaining sales amongst the older segment of the target market, from 25-35 year olds. The campaign aims to increase the target market consumer base by 5% the first year, from 13% to 18% , 7% in the second, and increase by 10% in the final year of the campaign, generating a target market consumer base of 35%.

Plan B

Under a timeline where the COVID-19 vaccine takes longer to distribute on a large scale and isn't readily available until August 2021, the objectives for 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan would have slight changes. Due to our inability to connect with the target market directly, the goals of the 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan would be shifted due to the change of scheduling of the plans tactics. With this timeline, growth in both awareness and expansion of the targeted consumer base would be delayed. Beginning with the awareness among the segmented market, brand recognition would increase first by 4%, then by the second year when the vaccine is widely distributed, would increase by 12%, then 8% in the final year. For the growth of the targeted market consumer base would start with 7% of the first year, 5% in the second, and 10% in the final year of the campaign. Ending at the same goal of an increased consumer base at 35% total.

*See Appendix for Sales Forecast graph



Campaigns & Competitions

'PODS Roadshow'

The PODS company, as noted in the case, has seen a 23% decrease in market share in young adults since 2012. To kick off the three year 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan, PODS will implement a college campus Roadshow that aims to give students an opportunity to enjoy fresh food, beverages, and be involved in many fun activities. The goal of the Roadshow is to draw in current and prospective students at these universities to inform them of the PODS brand and services. The 'PODS Roadshow' will drive to many different college campuses within the Southern and Northern parts of America, as well as heading into Alberta, Canada to the University of Calgary. By extending the Roadshow to Calgary, there will be exposure to the Canadian market. Involving students in the PODS Roadshow will allow them to learn about the upcoming competitions that PODS plans to initiate later into the three year plan, such as the 'College Move In Competition' and '#MoveOutMonday' campaigns. This kickoff event will be a semi-annual event during the Awareness year, one occurring in February for the southernmost campuses and one in September for the northernmost and Canadian campuses.

These dates have been chosen for two main reasons. Starting in the south during the winter months will allow PODS to have the most optimal attendance numbers. Furthermore, heading toward the northern campuses will be advantageous during the month of September, as the weather will give way to greater attendance numbers much like the winter month for the southern campuses. Secondly, these two months are when college students are arriving on campus. This is peak time for traffic for a couple reasons; as stated by author, Zola Dincin Schneider in her book: "Campus Visits and College Interviews: A Complete Guide for College-Bound Students and Their Families", she states the best time for college visits for seniors in high-school is in September, as many schools start mid-to-late August. February is also seen as a great time of year to visit the warmer climate campuses, as stated by Benjamin Caldarelli, a partner with Princeton College Consulting, LLC.

As students return to campus and see the PODS setup, the individuals running the stands will ask the students about their moving process. These individuals will then be able to inform the students on how they can enhance their moving experience in the future by using PODS. This will be a great way to increase awareness among college students and those targeted in the 'Moving Up and Moving Out' campaign. This Roadshow will also give light to how many students intend on using PODS for their next moves, thus giving PODS information that will allow them to measure future market share and sales growth.

In total, \$268,000 will be allotted to the Roadshow events. PODS will spend approximately \$450 on three banner advertisements per location displaying the date, time, and location of the event. The remaining \$260,800 will be distributed amongst the expenses for each event, about \$16,300 for each location. These expenses will include food and beverages, permits and insurance coverage, handouts and prizes offered, and any other expenses that arise (Ollis, 2020).



PODS will partner with local businesses in each of the surrounding areas to grow the business to business portion of the company. These outside partners include local food and beverage vendors, printing companies, and possibly event production partners who can provide outside knowledge and local insights.

‘Here to Get You Moving’

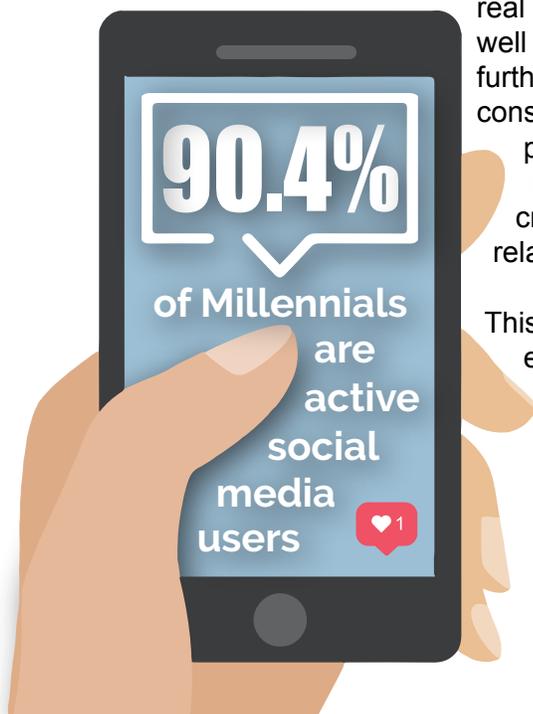
PODS prides itself on their ability to provide a moving and storage service that is built through their strong branding values of dependability, flexibility, and empowerment. Increasing brand awareness and improving sales within the target markets will be accomplished through the use of various social media campaigns and competitions. This will allow consumers to recognize the opportunities that are available and can be taken advantage of through moving. ‘Here to Get You Moving’ will build on the already established PODS brand by developing awareness within the target demographic.

The ‘Here to Get You Moving’ strategic plan has been constructed with the idea that moving expands an individual’s ability to develop both professionally and personally. As young adults advance further into their careers, opportunities will arise that require the immediate need for a moving and storage service containing the ability to move with them every step of the way. The concept of ‘Here to Get You Moving’ will, in the eyes of the consumer, reimagine PODS as a transparent, reliable and personable company. Whether they are achieving personal career goals or starting a new family, PODS will move them towards these new horizons.

The main effort of ‘Here to Get You Moving’ will be to expand on the mover’s experience by implementing a 3-year strategic plan focused on engaging the consumer through their own experiences and individuality. Year one (‘Awareness’) will focus on growing the brand name amidst Gen Z, while year two (‘Transition’) develops a connection between the two sections of the target market with year three (‘Sales’), which is focused on growing the PODS customer base with Millennials. PODS’ plan involves building on consumer awareness within the target market by implementing semi-annual competitions and moving campaigns through the use of social media platforms. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok will be used to coordinate these campaigns through various forms of user generated content. This content will consist of

real consumers documenting their PODS experiences, as well as providing the target market with opportunities to further develop their professional image and increase consumer consciousness for the PODS brand. Those participating in these promotions will gain valuable insights into how PODS operates with and for their customers, thus creating a lasting impression that will develop enduring relationships with lifelong consumers.

This strategic plan has two separate timelines due to the economic uncertainties brought by the coronavirus. This means that PODS will plan to have their Awareness and Transition year timelines switched. Thus, the ‘Roadshow’



will be moved back a year so that PODS can limit the amount of cases they may be causing. Plan A is PODS' optimistic view of widespread distribution of the coronavirus sure, while Plan B is then their pessimistic view of the cure's distribution.

'College Move-in Competition'

To enter the 'College Move-in Competition', college students from across the United States and Canada will create videos documenting their usage of PODS moving to or from their college housing. Students will tag two fellow students @PODSofficial and hashtag #PODSMoveIn on TikTok, Twitter, or Instagram to enter for a chance to win either a free container and/or three months of storage, or a free PODS truck rental for their next move. This competition will be semi-annual, the first round of the competition will be during the spring semester, and the second during the fall semester. The spring semester submissions for the competition will be accepted from January until March, and the winner will be selected in April. The fall semester submissions will be accepted from July until the second week of September, and the winner will be selected in October. The winner of the competition will be contacted through whichever medium they posted their submission, and receive a promo code that will be valid for up to two years after the competition ends.

To kick off this campaign, PODS will post an initial video on TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram introducing the competition and describing the rules and timeline of the competition. The focus of the promotional videos should be light-hearted and entertaining to capture the attention of the target market. As the Roadshow will kick off the 'College Move-in Competition,' video footage and photos should be used from the campus visits in the promotional content for the competition.

A social media competition is a creative and interactive way to introduce and bring awareness of PODS to the target market. The usage of multiple platforms (TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter) allows for a wide variety of users to enter the competition and reduces barriers to entry. To optimize engagement with the competition, PODS should focus on posting their promotional content about the competition on TikTok due to its ability to generate high engagement numbers. This application is very popular with the target market, as 50% of their 800 million active users are under 34 years old (Omnicoagency, 2020). The platform's algorithm will push the hashtag towards eligible participants. The advertising content for the 'College Move-in Competition' should be witty and interactive in order to organically increase reach and engagement, therefore driving consumers to the PODS official TikTok page to learn more about the competition and enter (see TikTok algorithm in Appendix). The video format of this competition also lends itself to a more transparent depiction of the company.

#MoveOutMonday

The '#MoveOutMonday' campaign is designed to promote user-generated content for the PODS official social media pages. Through this campaign, users are able to submit their own photos and videos to the PODS Instagram and Facebook pages for a chance to be featured and tagged. PODS will promote this campaign from June to July. This will provide an opportunity for



the campaign to have more exposure by July, as July tends to be one of the busiest months to move (Movinglabor, 2020). At the beginning of the month, PODS will post an initial #MoveOutMonday on their social media feeds, as well as advertise their stories on Instagram to inform followers of the new trend. After the initial kick-off of the campaign, PODS will choose different photos submitted by users to post every Monday for the month of July.

To create a cohesive look, PODS should use a similar editing style as what is currently seen on their social media pages. PODS also should add the #MoveOutMonday hashtag onto the photos in the editing process in order to differentiate the photos on the feed and create an eye-catching campaign.

The purpose of this campaign is to increase user generated content to increase engagement and build trust with the consumers. The '#MoveOutMonday' campaign will encourage interaction on Instagram and Facebook through likes, comments, and shares since the content will be more personable and an interactive way to become involved with the company. PODS aims to create a strong foundation with their customers that will extend out to family and friends, thus ensuring a lasting customer base within the target market. On each individual post, followers will be encouraged to interact with the post through comments and shares.

'Moving Up and Moving Out'

The 'Moving Up and Moving Out' campaign is designed to advertise to young professionals and hiring departments for those who have just landed a job early in their career and are ready to move to a new city and out of their current housing situations. PODS will use photos and videos of the target market graduating, moving out of their current housing, and/or scoring their first job in order to show relatable content. This campaign will be most beneficial on LinkedIn, as the platform's main objective is to connect people who are looking for professional and business opportunities, as well as Human Resources professionals that can provide these services to new employees (Fallon, 2019).

The theme for this campaign will be light-hearted and witty, to help make the stressful situation of moving to a new city and starting a new job less daunting, similar to how PODS helps ease the stress of moving.

The purpose of this campaign is to increase brand awareness and drive sales. A survey done by Stackla found that 79% of consumers say user generated content highly impacts their purchasing decisions. This campaign will also enhance the level of trust and transparency between customers and the brand because of the "social proof" seen on the PODS social media pages. Seeing real customers use the service encourages prospective customers that it is a reliable service (Stackla, 2019).



Tactics

Instagram

Instagram is a platform with over 1 billion accounts worldwide. Of these accounts, over 62% of users are between the ages of 18 and 34 (Clement, 2020). For Gen Z specifically, Instagram has the highest daily engagement rate among similar applications at 65% (Green, 2019). As of November 2020, the official PODS Instagram account has 1,017 followers. The account receives an average of 14 likes and 0.5 comments, resulting in an engagement rate of 1.44% (socialblade, 2020). To increase engagement, PODS will post more user generated content and embrace the Instagram story features, which include polls, questions, and quizzes (Ramakrishman, 2020). The PODS official Instagram account will also start to design a consistent and visually appealing feed. Currently, the page is visually consistent, but can be transformed to appear more brand-aligned through the incorporation of the brand's colors throughout the feed. The page will feature posts from the '#MoveOutMonday' campaign to engage with their current followers and gain additional followers.

According to the marketing agency ThriveHive, although it costs more to advertise on Instagram, this site uses advanced targeting and as of March 2019 "users click on Instagram ads roughly 2.5 times more often than on ads for other social media sites." With this statistic in mind, PODS will allocate the most money to this platform each year. In the campaign year focused on awareness, PODS will allocate a total of \$229,000 to Instagram, with \$29,000 to the 'College Move In Competition' and '#MoveOutMonday' campaigns. During the Transition and Sales Years, \$325,000 and \$324,000 will be spent on Instagram advertisements respectively. This \$1,000 difference drives more attention to the platforms since this application is popular amongst both Gen Z and Millennials.

TikTok

TikTok is one of the fastest growing social media applications on the market today, and over 60% of users are from Gen Z (Muliadi, 2020). It is important for PODS to become more active on this platform to increase brand awareness for the younger portion of the target market. These users are also very loyal to the app, as 90% of all TikTok users access the app on a daily basis (Mohsin, 2020). PODS will upload original content on TikTok that focuses on the simplicity of using PODS, moving and storage tips, and creative videos that tell a story. Creative ideas could include a moving "glow up", or a fun way to use a POD instead of just using it for storage or moving. The campaigns can be altered to keep up with current trends or popular hashtags on the application. This app will also be used to promote the 'College Move-In Competition' campaign. The high level of creativity is an integral part of TikTok that will lend itself well to this creative competition.

Starting with a baseline amount of \$50,000 per quarter for advertisements in the Awareness year. PODS will allocate an additional \$3,000 per month to TikTok when running the 'College Move-In Competition', totaling \$220,000 in advertisements on TikTok during each year of the campaign. During the Transition and Sales Years, the base amount will be \$69,000 per quarter,



with an additional \$5,000 a month for each ad campaign, totaling \$306,000 in each year. These added amounts will boost the probability of eligible entrants discovering the competition on this platform.

Facebook

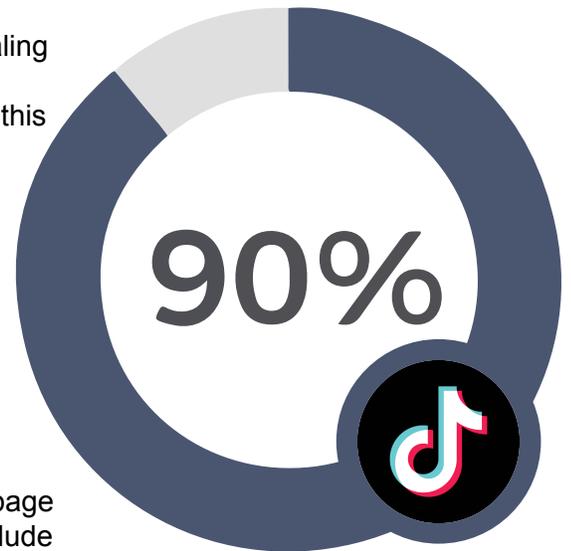
PODS will utilize their solid foundation on Facebook to not only grow the 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan, but also to concentrate on developing an increasing customer base and market share within the target market. Research shows that >60% of Gen Z uses Facebook (American.edu, 2018). PODS' 123,445 user likes and 119,611 user followers on Facebook are an asset that can be further utilized through the implementation of strategic posts. The PODS Facebook page currently posts a range of photos, videos, and links which include packing hacks, helpful moving information, and company updates. Video content is especially beneficial for Gen Z, as it is the most engaging (Linde, 2020). PODS should post two high quality posts per day, as any more than that will result in less engagement from followers (Cox, 2020). Beyond keepin up with trends, innovation, and media content over the course of the three year period, incorporating strategically promoted campaign content into social media coordination appears to be the extent of development this platform could see in the near future.

Even though younger generations are moving away from Facebook, this site still offers a 9-10% conversion rate (WebFX, 2020). With this in mind, an increasing amount will be spent on Facebook advertising throughout the Awareness and Sales years. Starting at \$211,000 and growing to \$295,000, Facebook presents a great opportunity to promote the '#MoveOutMonday' campaign and engage potential customers in the older section of the target market.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a current strength in PODS' social media landscape. With their 16,533 followers on the site, PODS has a strong base to shift towards posting and promoting career-related moving and storage content. In order to expand upon the current strong foundation of followers, it is important that PODS continues to follow their current models. As one of the leading moving accounts on LinkedIn, they will be able to link content from Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to help connect content bridges to each outlet and create a more cohesive image. To connect with the young professionals on LinkedIn, PODS will implement the 'Moving Up and Moving Out' campaign. As young professionals are searching for jobs and connecting with other professionals, they will also be able to learn about how PODS can help them move into their new city or apartment. According to a study conducted by Zenefits, "Millennials are the group making the largest impact on today's work culture, and also the fastest segment on LinkedIn by 3 times."

In addition to advertising to individuals within the target market, PODS will also advertise their services to human resources professionals on the business and employment-oriented online



90 percent of all
TikTok users access
the app on a
daily basis



service. By advertising to human resources professionals, PODS will be able to reach those who are likely to interact with new hires or employee transfers. This campaign will be more focused on the value they can bring to the company, as opposed to the ease that it will bring to a young professional who is moving.

Within their advertising platform, firms are able to select up to 100 targeted options based on occupation, industry, fields of study, etc. (LinkedIn, 2020), allowing advertisements to reach the desired market of Gen Z and Millennials along with Human Resource professionals that interact with newly hired employees. A recommended budget for LinkedIn is \$15,000 per quarter (LinkedIn, 2020), but by allocating \$19,500 per quarter throughout the Awareness Year and \$20,500 per quarter in the Transition and Sales Years, PODS increases their probability of winning advertising space auctions on the site, making it more likely potential consumers will see their posts.

Referral Program

Referral programs are effective for bringing in new customers by better matching the company with referred customers (Efti, 2019). When a customer refers to their friends or family members, they are likely to choose people who are likely to be moving or in the market for a storage option. This will not only increase sales for PODS, but also increase brand awareness. Social enrichment is another reason why referral programs could benefit them. Social enrichment can increase brand loyalty for the customer who is referring their friend or family member to PODS. The customer making the referral is more likely to use them again in the future (AmericanMarketingAssociation, 2018).

Through the referral program, customers will have the option to refer a friend before checking out. If they refer a friend, the customer will receive a \$25 Ikea gift card through their email account, contingent on the referred customer making a purchase. They will also receive an email from PODS, stating that they were referred by a friend. The email will explain what PODS is and why they should use them for their upcoming moving and storage needs. The referred customer will receive a code in the email that they will then input into the PODS website at the time they purchase a moving or storage service.

The most beneficial way to implement the referral program is to secure a partnership with Ikea. Ikea is the ideal choice to partner with due to their nationwide presence and wide variety of furniture and home products. This partnership is beneficial for both companies because Ikea would supply the gift card codes to PODS for the referral program, and in turn, PODS customers are more likely to shop at Ikea because of the gift card they received. PODS also receives value from this partnership because they have an incentive for their current customers to refer friends. This incentive also adds value to the brand rather than removing value, in the case of a discount. If a partnership is not attainable, purchasing gift cards from Ikea or a similar company would be a good alternative.



Metrics

At the end of the 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan, PODS will see a growth of 35% in the target market. This three year plan will begin with a focus on building awareness in Gen Z through social media campaigns and a college Roadshow. It will then transition into a sales-based plan directed at Millennials and the older portion of Gen Z who are moving up in their lives through various social media campaigns demonstrating the use of PODS at different stages of their lives.

As of February 2019, 90% of 18-29 year olds and 82% of 30-49 year olds use social networks (Clement, 2020), thus using social media to attract these markets is a key factor in developing lifelong customers at PODS. While social media platforms are a great way to advertise for companies, they also lend themselves to increasing brand awareness, interacting with current and potential customers, and promoting PODS' products and services.

The 'Awareness' year of the 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan will show the smallest portion of sales increase at 5%. This year is focused on growing awareness amongst the Gen Z market with about 26% of the \$1,000,000 budget allocated to the PODS Roadshow. Getting this age group involved and excited about PODS as a company will bring a higher level of engagement and participation in the 'College Move-In Competition'. Social media campaigns will be tracked using advertisement impressions and website traffic that stem from paid posts. PODS is able to track the success of the Roadshow by observing website traffic, reviews and feedback of the events, and mentions of the company. This aids the organization in adapting the plans and events for each stop to better suit consumer wishes.

Years two and three of this strategic plan will focus on the overlap between Gen Z and Millennials, along with the older portion of the target market. These years will see all of the \$1,000,000 budget allocated to social media advertising. Tracking of the awareness portion of these campaigns will be similar to the plan for the 'Awareness' year by doing the following: track impressions and clicks and website traffic stemming from paid posts on social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Each of these platforms provides its own analytical tracking capabilities; the use of a social media management platform will allow for this information to be gathered and analyzed in one place.

Tracking the success of new sales from these campaigns is more challenging. A monthly analysis will be conducted over the lifetime of the 'Here to Get You Moving' strategic plan with advertising and budgetary adjustments made as deemed necessary to aid in the success of this plan. Benchmarks will include a 5% increase in sales throughout the 'Awareness' year, followed by a 7% and 10% increase in the 'Transition' and 'Sales' years, respectively for Plan A. Plan B would see an increase of 7, 5, and 10% in sales over this three year campaign period.



Appendix

STRENGTHS

- Experienced with contactless service
- Market leader for moving and public storage
- Ease of use and flexibility of shipping
- Seen as higher quality due to simple branding



WEAKNESSES

- Lack of product diversity in size of containers.
- Current brand position is aimed at established families moving
- Competitive disadvantaged given lack of transparency on pricing
- Website UI is difficult to navigate



- An increase in containerized moving in the market
- Help a new majority of young adults move out of their parents' home
- Incentivize previous customers to refer younger potential customers.
- Promote ability to customize moves based on customer needs for Gen Z and Millennials



- Declining market of rental moves
- New delivery containers being patented by competitors
- Younger markets don't have space to use PODS products
- Economic uncertainty due to the corona virus pandemic



THREATS

OPPORTUNITIES



TikTok Algorithm

“When you open TikTok and land in your For You feed, you're presented with a stream of videos curated to your interests, making it easy to find content and creators you love. This feed is powered by a recommendation system that delivers content to each user that is likely to be of interest to that particular user. Part of the magic of TikTok is that there's no one For You feed – while different people may come upon some of the same standout videos, each person's feed is unique and tailored to that specific individual (Freeman, 2020)”.

Sample Survey Questions

Q15 Please rate your experience with U-Haul. (1 meaning you hated it, 10 meaning you loved it) (Click and drag the slider to your desired value)

Rate your experience with U-Haul

A horizontal slider scale from 0 to 10. The slider is currently positioned at 1.

Q5 Rank these qualities of moving in order of importance to you (Click and drag each quality to place in the order you deem necessary)

Timeline given to move 1

Unpacking/Packing Services 2

Accessibility 3

Driving your own belongings 4

Q38 Which of these companies have you heard of? (Check all that apply)

U-Haul

PODS

Two Men and a Truck

Penske

United

Other (Please Specify)



Sample Survey Questions Continued

Q23 Please describe what you liked and disliked about your experience with PODS?



Q27 How likely are you to use this moving company again?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Likely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely



Q13 Which moving company did you use?

- U-Haul
- Two Men and a Truck
- PODS
- United
- I moved myself
- Other (please specify)



Q12 Have you moved in the past 5 years?

- Yes
- No



Company Awareness Data

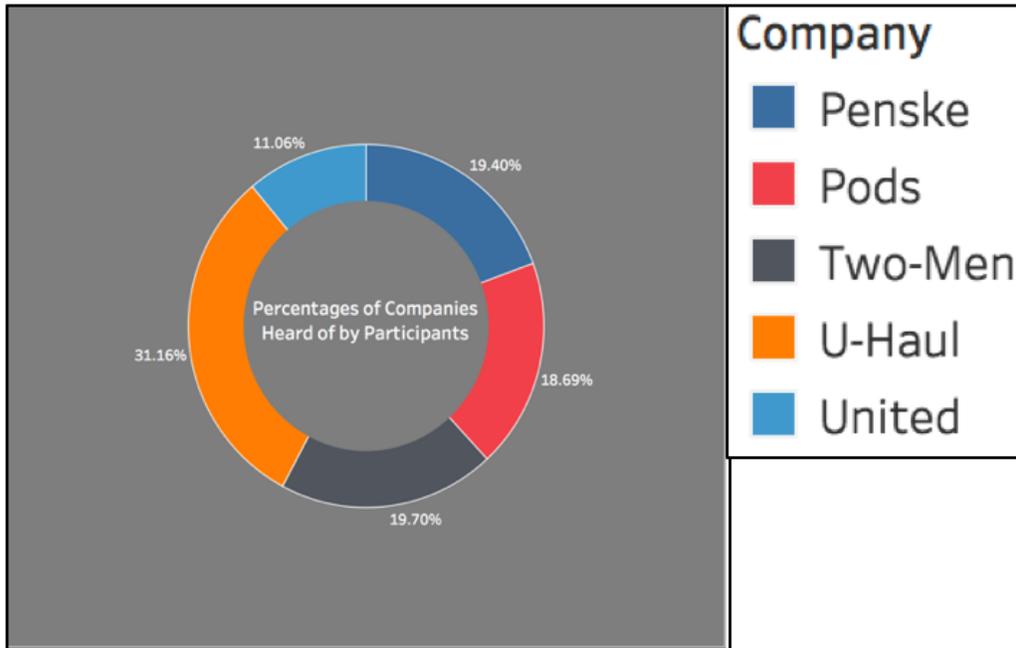


Figure 1

Company Usage Data

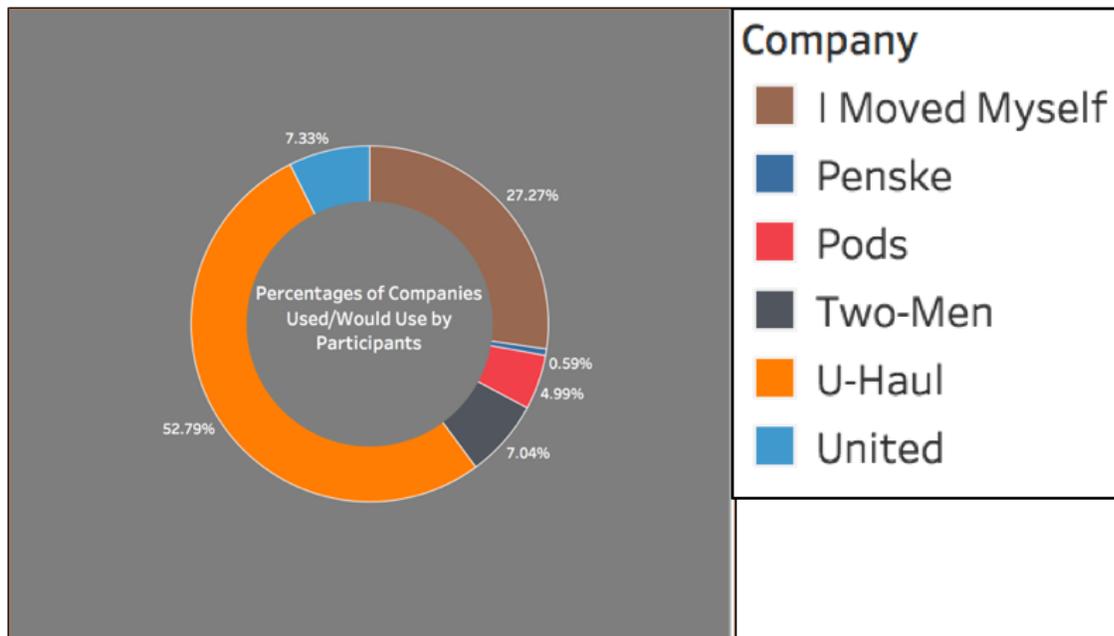


Figure 2



Average Experience by Company Used

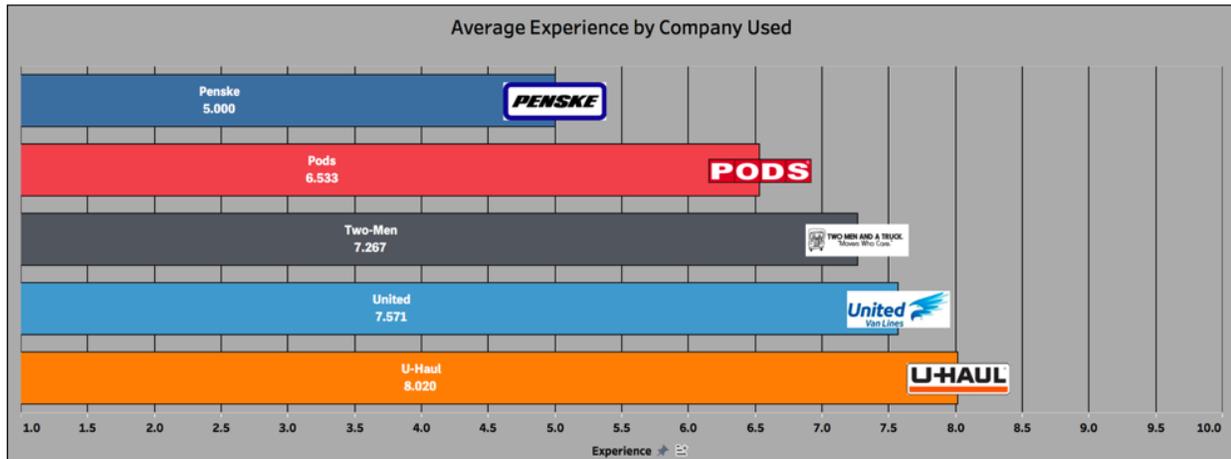


Figure 3

Average Experience by Company Used

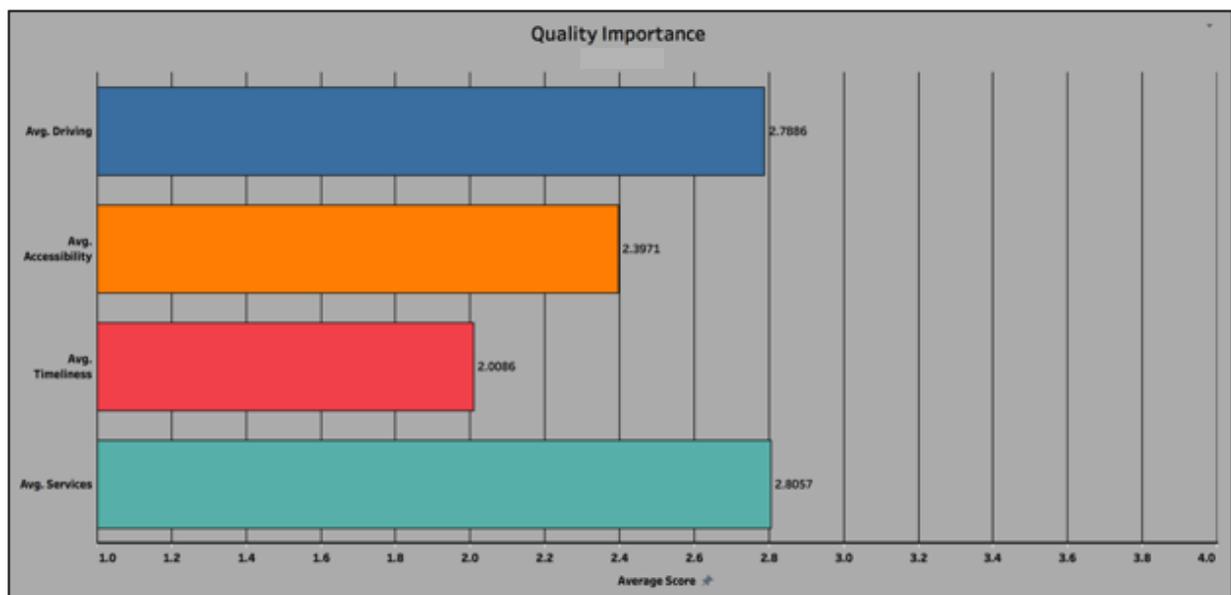


Figure 4



Average Stress Levels of Moving



Figure 5

Likeliness of Company to be Used Again

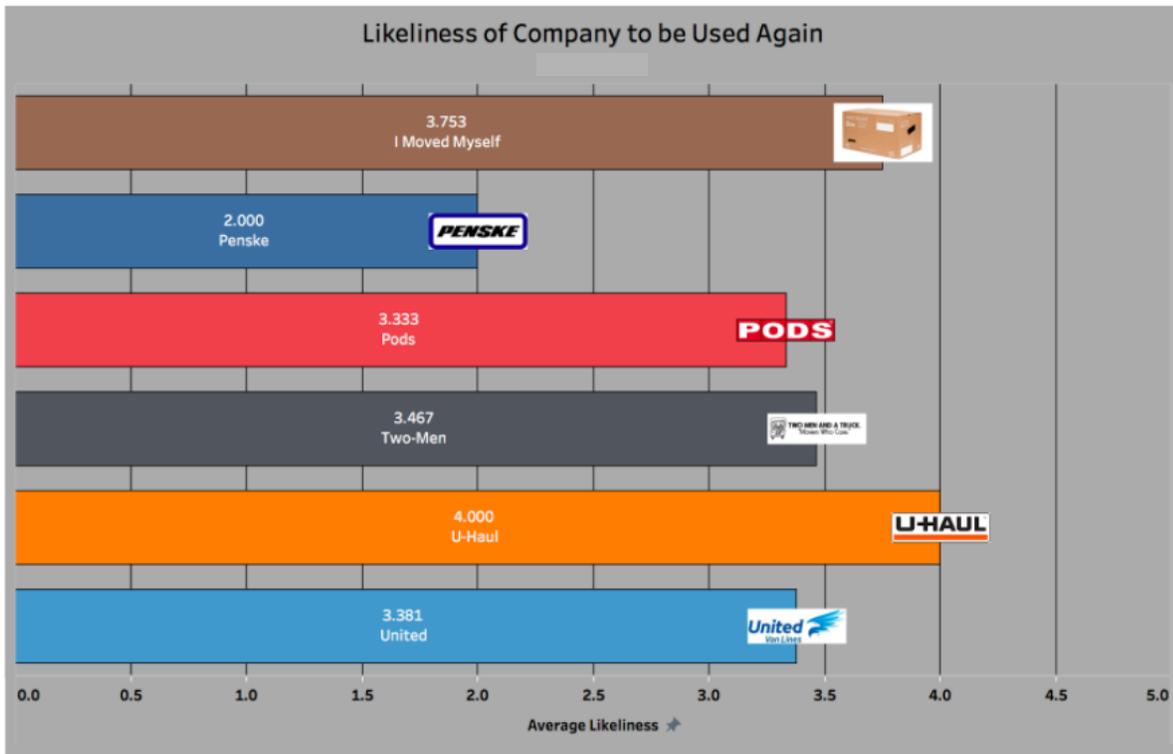


Figure 6



Social Media Usage

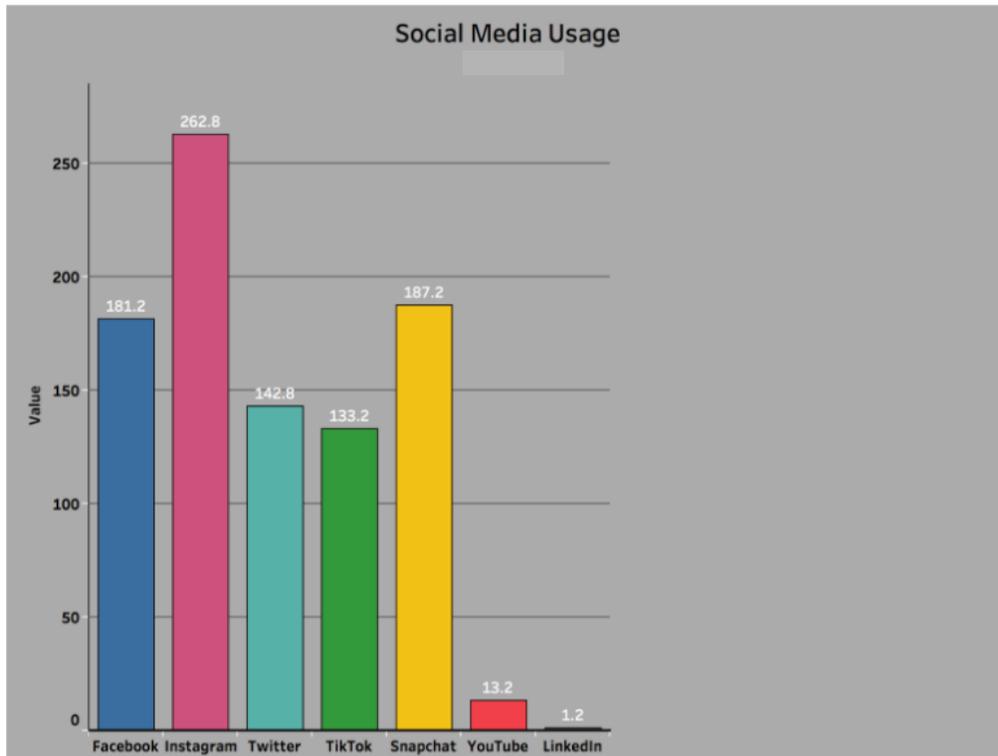
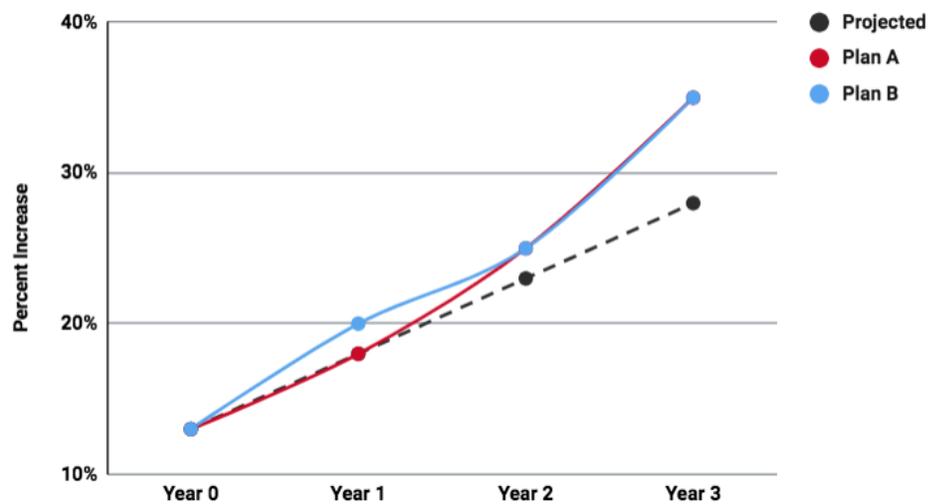


Figure 7

Sales Forecast



PODS Roadshow Sample Ad



PODS Roadshow Campus Banner



PODS Roadshow Map



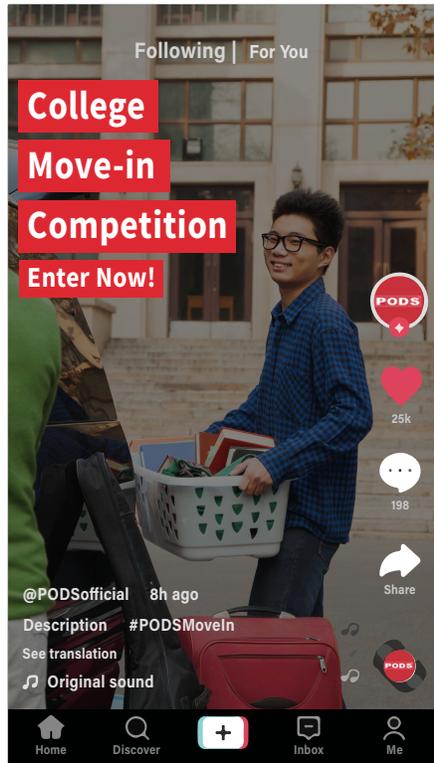
#MoveOutMonday Sample Post



'Moving Up & Moving Out' Sample Post



'College Move-in Competition' Sample Post



PLAN A: TIMELINE

YEAR 1 Awareness Year

Here to Get You Moving January 2021 - December 2021	
Spring College Move-in Competition January 2021 - March 2021	Quarter 1 Spending 01/01/2021 \$321,500
Moving Up and Moving Out January 2021 - December 2021	Quarter 2 Spending 04/01/2021 \$175,000
Roadshow - South February 2021	Quarter 3 Spending 07/01/2021 \$333,500
Fall College Move-in Competition July 2021 - September 2021	Quarter 4 Spending 10/01/2021 \$169,500
Move Out Monday June 2021 - July 2021	
Roadshow - North September 2021	

YEAR 2 Transition Year

Here to Get You Moving January 2022 - December 2022	Quarter 1 Spending 01/01/2021 \$257,500
Spring College Move-in Competition January 2022 - March 2022	Quarter 2 Spending 04/01/2021 \$237,500
Moving Up and Moving Out January 2022 - December 2022	Quarter 3 Spending 07/01/2021 \$277,500
Fall College Move-in Competition July 2022 - September 2022	Quarter 4 Spending 10/01/2021 \$227,500
Move Out Monday June 2022 - July 2022	

YEAR 3 Sales Year

Here to Get You Moving January 2023 - December 2023	Quarter 1 Spending 01/01/2021 \$257,500
Spring College Move-in Competition January 2023 - March 2023	Quarter 2 Spending 04/01/2021 \$237,500
Moving Up and Moving Out January 2023 - December 2023	Quarter 3 Spending 07/01/2021 \$277,500
Fall College Move-in Competition July 2023 - September 2023	Quarter 4 Spending 10/01/2021 \$227,500
Move Out Monday June 2023 - July 2023	



PLAN B: TIMELINE

YEAR 1 Awareness Year

Here to Get You Moving January 2021 - December 2022	Quarter 1 Spending 01/01/2021 \$257,500
Spring College Move-in Competition January 2021 - March 2022	Quarter 2 Spending 04/01/2021 \$237,500
Moving Up and Moving Out January 2021 - December 2022	Quarter 3 Spending 07/01/2021 \$277,500
Fall College Move-in Competition July 2021 - September 2022	Quarter 4 Spending 10/01/2021 \$227,500
Move Out Monday June 2021 - July 2022	

YEAR 2 Transition Year

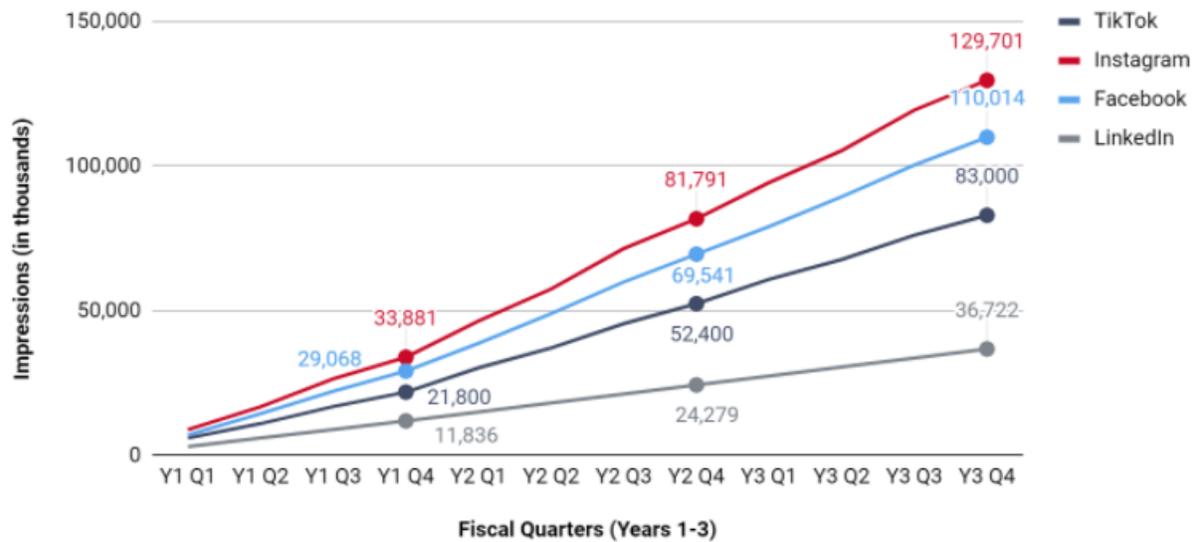
Here to Get You Moving January 2022 - December 2022	Quarter 1 Spending 01/01/2021 \$321,500
Spring College Move-in Competition January 2022 - March 2022	Quarter 2 Spending 04/01/2021 \$175,000
Moving Up and Moving Out January 2022 - December 2022	Quarter 3 Spending 07/01/2021 \$333,500
Roadshow - South February 2022	Quarter 4 Spending 10/01/2021 \$169,500
Fall College Move-in Competition July 2022 - September 2022	
Move Out Monday June 2022 - July 2022	
Roadshow - North September 2022	

YEAR 3 Sales Year

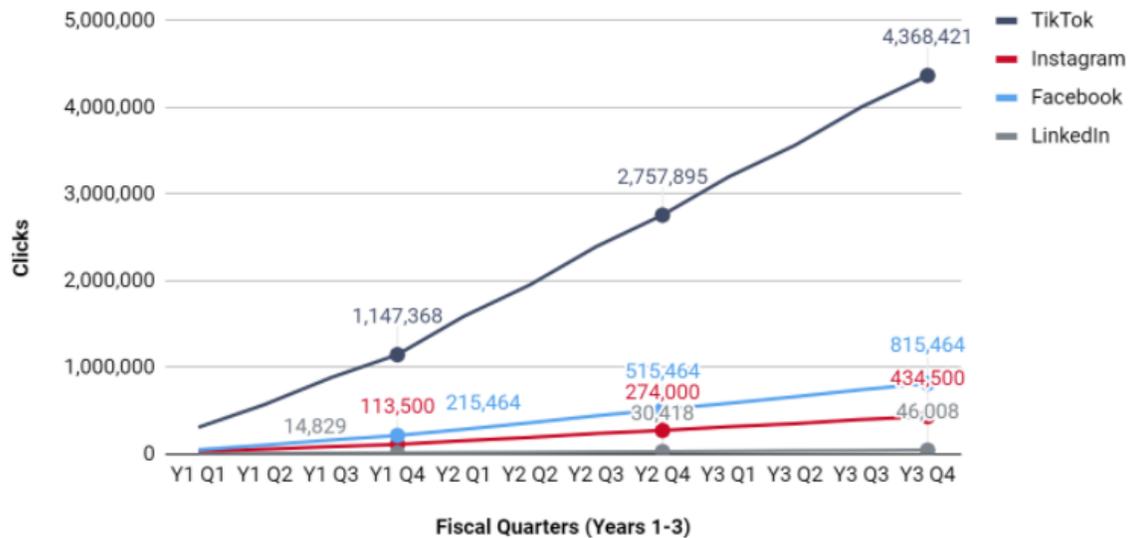
Here to Get You Moving January 2023 - December 2023	Quarter 1 Spending 01/01/2021 \$257,500
Spring College Move-in Competition January 2023 - March 2023	Quarter 2 Spending 04/01/2021 \$237,500
Moving Up and Moving Out January 2023 - December 2023	Quarter 3 Spending 07/01/2021 \$277,500
Fall College Move-in Competition July 2023 - September 2023	Quarter 4 Spending 10/01/2021 \$227,500
Move Out Monday June 2023 - July 2023	



2021 - 2023 Accumulation of Total Impressions



2021 - 2023 Accumulation of Total Clicks



2021 - 2023 Budget

MASTER BUDGET – AWARENESS					
FISCAL YEAR BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2021					
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year 1 Totals
SOCIAL MEDIAS:					
TikTok	\$ 59,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 59,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 218,000
Instagram	\$ 59,000	\$ 53,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 227,000
Facebook	\$ 50,000	\$ 53,000	\$ 56,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 209,000
LinkedIn	\$ 19,500	\$ 19,500	\$ 19,500	\$ 19,500	\$ 78,000
ROADSHOW:					
Banners	\$ 3,600	\$ -	\$ 3,600	\$ -	\$ 7,200
Expenses	\$ 130,400	\$ -	\$ 130,400	\$ -	\$ 260,800
TOTAL	\$ 321,500	\$ 175,500	\$ 333,500	\$ 169,500	\$ 1,000,000
BUDGET/YEAR	\$ 1,000,000				\$ -



2021 - 2023 Budget Continued

MASTER BUDGET – TRANSITION					
FISCAL YEAR BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2022					
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year 2 Totals
SOCIAL MEDIAS:					
TikTok	\$ 84,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 84,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 306,000
Instagram	\$ 84,000	\$ 74,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 321,000
Facebook	\$ 69,000	\$ 74,000	\$ 79,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 291,000
LinkedIn	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500	\$ 82,000
TOTAL	\$ 257,500	\$ 237,500	\$ 277,500	\$ 227,500	\$ 1,000,000
BUDGET/YEAR	\$ 1,000,000				\$ -



2021 - 2023 Budget Continued

MASTER BUDGET – SALES					
FISCAL YEAR BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2023					
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year 3 Totals
SOCIAL MEDIAS:					
TikTok	\$ 84,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 84,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 306,000
Instagram	\$ 84,000	\$ 74,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 321,000
Facebook	\$ 69,000	\$ 74,000	\$ 79,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 291,000
LinkedIn	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500	\$ 20,500	\$ 82,000
TOTAL	\$ 257,500	\$ 237,500	\$ 277,500	\$ 227,500	\$ 1,000,000
BUDGET/YEAR	\$ 1,000,000				\$ -



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