

# 215 Marketing

*Brand Builders. Digital Dreamers. Marketing Mavericks.*



## **BUSINESS SERVICES OPERATIONS RESEARCH**

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### One- to three-page description of the project

This market research study will focus on the development of a long-term employee engagement strategy at *215 Marketing*, a full-service marketing agency based in Philadelphia, PA. Gallup, a leader in market research, defines engaged employees as those who are “involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their work.” Building a team of engaged employees will allow any business, and specifically 215 Marketing, to succeed as a service business in a highly competitive industry. Although 215 Marketing possesses a team of driven employees, it does not have a scalable and measurable engagement strategy. Since 215 Marketing is a young startup, its engagement strategy must be fluid enough that it can sustain rapid growth and introduction of many more employees. Employees are currently engaged through a combination of benefits and company culture, without there being any method of gaining feedback from the employees themselves. Our plan will create an employee engagement strategy for 215 Marketing that will focus on the key issues that are a hindrance to engagement today, but will be a scalable strategy at the same time.

### Research Methods Used in Study

Our research study consisted of secondary and primary research. We first developed a clear understanding of employee engagement by reading Gallup’s 2013 report on the status of engagement in the U.S. After gaining background knowledge, we learned about the services 215 Marketing has to offer by visiting the company website, blog, and social media. Through this online research, we learned that 215 Marketing has a tight-knit and driven team. Afterwards, we conducted primary research to gain insight into the engagement strategies developed by the managers and current levels of engagement at the startup. Our primary research consisted of employee surveys and interviews, as well as detailed interviews with the managers. In addition, we conducted phone interviews with several of 215’s competitors, in order to learn about engagement strategies they are utilizing. We also visited their websites and blogs. Upon the conclusion of our primary research, we once again conducted secondary research in order to develop specific solutions to the engagement issues we found during our primary research.

### Findings and Conclusions of Study

Upon completing our research study, we organized our data into a SWOT analysis. Our results are as follows:

- Strengths - the managers and employees are close friends, employees believe their job furthers the company’s mission, fun culture balanced by hard work, free coffee, free healthcare, and free *Beats* headphones
- Weaknesses - lack of transparency between management and employees, lack of a long-term strategy, lack of a professional relationship due to the friendships they have, high levels of stress, employees don’t get to focus on individual strengths, the office space is inadequately painted and furnished
- Opportunities - better horizontal and vertical communication, development of a long term strategy exceeding that of its competitors, increase success of the company through more engaged employees
- Threats - competitors such as Push 10 and Nimblelight develop stronger employee engagement strategies, thus bettering their bottom line

### Proposed Strategic Plan

To address the engagement issues discovered during the research study, we propose a strategic plan that encompasses 6 major goals; these 6 goals entail a well-rounded approach for long-term engagement. For our first goal to improve wellbeing and reduce stress, we propose a mindfulness program, a gym and health food store campaign, daily morning walks with *FitBit*, and tri-yearly company retreats. To increase staff communication, our second goal, we propose monthly all staff meetings, monthly manager meetings, monthly employee engagement surveys, and lunch and learn. The third goal is to increase acknowledgement of employee accomplishments, and to accomplish this, the company will use the *iDoneThis* computer program. To give employees opportunities to focus on individual strengths, the fourth goal, they will go to industry conferences, blog, learn through online courses, and practice 10% time. To establish clear expectations and boundaries for the employees, the fifth goal, they will develop core values and have a sit down discussion about each employee’s role within the company. Finally, goal 6 renovates the office space, and to carry this out, 215 will paint one wall teal, hang motivational posters, convert a small room into a “Mindfulness Room,” and replace their normal desks with height adjustable desks.

## II. INTRODUCTION

### A. Description of the business or organization

215 Marketing is a full service marketing agency based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. “Young, agile, and high energy,” they specialize in website development, integrated marketing strategy, B2B internal and external support, content marketing, and search engine optimization. 215 Marketing prides itself on its mission to deliver consistent and measurable results for the clients that seek out its services, as well as its ability to “take their online presence to the next level.” By taking a comprehensive and client-centric approach to developing marketing strategies, this agency is able to successfully brand itself as “Brand Builders. Digital Dreamers. Marketing Mavericks.”



215 Marketing was founded by Jon J. Vogel, Garrett Gillin, and Edward Reybitz in 2013 in a startup incubation program at the Baiada Institute of Entrepreneurship at Drexel University. Vogel and Gillin currently run the company with the goal of taking digital marketing to new heights.

215 Marketing provides a variety of services, primarily in digital marketing, that allow their clients to find great success in a technology-driven era of advertising. Digital marketing is the promotion of products through electronic



mediums, such as the Internet and social media. This form of marketing results in increased communication with customers and generally has a smaller budget than traditional advertising, making it a great option for businesses of all sizes. Upon developing a website for a client, 215 Marketing works on the company’s brand elements and materials, on-site blog, social media, channel reputation, community outreach, and other methods of outbound marketing. Of course, since 215 Marketing’s main focus is digital marketing, they excel in web design, mobile app and software development, landing pages, and ecommerce. They offer general marketing strategies to their clientele as well, which include logo enhancement, print advertising, and general consulting. As

an official Google Partner, 215 Marketing is recognized as an online advertising professional with expertise in Google Adwords. 215 Marketing's employees refer to their company simply as 215; henceforth, we will do the same in our report for ease of reading.

Although 215 is still a startup, an entrepreneurial venture in the first stage of its operations, it works with companies of all sizes across many different industries and is rapidly expanding the scope of its business.

#### **B. Description of the community (economic, geographic, demographic and socioeconomic factors)**

The current population of the United States is around 318.9 million, making it the third most populous country in the world. It has established itself as the world's largest economy with a GDP of 16.8 trillion USD. With the rise of digital marketing, firms like 215 will be in high demand. According to a study conducted by market research firm Mundo, 80% of companies plan on increasing their digital marketing budgets over the next 12-18 months. In fact, U.S. spending on digital ads reached an astounding \$60 billion in 2015, and this number will only continue to rise. It is evident that in the U.S, and the world at large, digital marketing is on the rise. A need for innovative digital marketers has allowed 215 to thrive, as they serve clients in PA, NJ, and around country. Small businesses started by entrepreneurs are the backbone of the US economy, and these entrepreneurs require marketing strategies to position them for success in an increasingly competitive environment. 215's unique skillset positions its clients for success, as well as the agency itself.

Specifically, 215 is based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This city is the largest in Pennsylvania, with a population of around 1.5 million people; it is easily considered the economic and cultural hub of the Delaware Valley region. Starting a business in Philadelphia in the manner Vogel, Gillin, and Reybitz have done certainly has its advantages. Philadelphia is an hour away from New York City, the cost of living is affordable, and it is extremely nearby to business schools that produce some of the best entrepreneurs (including Drexel University, the school the co-founders of 215 attended). In fact, some of 215's employees were hired straight out of local schools. Philadelphia is compact and intimate enough that a lot of entrepreneurs and companies tend to know each other, making it easier to network and build relationships as opposed to a large city like New York. Philadelphia is also considered the perfect startup ecosystem, consisting of "incubators, accelerators, and access to funding and other support from universities and nonprofits [...] these things work in concert to help people turn innovative ideas into businesses" (Popular Mechanics magazine).