# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Objectives and Program Goals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Goals</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Marketing Goals and Timeline</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #1: Identify and Develop Airport Brand Platform and Promise</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps towards Airport Brand Development</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of an Airport Brand Platform</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifecycle of Passengers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Building to Connect with Potential Airline Partners</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Set / Benchmark Airports</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention Marketing Opportunities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport Brand Development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Markets</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Options</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #2: Enhance Air Service Options and Awareness</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Service Marketing Tool-Kit</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #3: Increase Awareness for Drive Travelers</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Components</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample 2015 Marketing and Advertising Budget</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #4: Develop Partnerships/Community Outreach</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #5: Sustain Air Service and Increase Enplanements</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #6: Enhance and Target Brand Communications</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #7: Enhance Airport Passenger Experience</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #8: Increase Passenger-Driven Airport Revenue</strong></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal #9: Increase Perception of Airport as a Regional Asset</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix One: Examples of Corporate Outreach Programs</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix Two: Example of Successful Regional Partnership</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of an overall Airport Strategic Plan process, Sixel Consulting Group has been commissioned by the University and the Airport to review the air service marketing priorities and overall brand strategy plans for Willard Airport (CMI). Sixel has since studied the past marketing efforts of the airport and current initiatives, as well as industry factors and benchmarks that may impact CMI. Willard Airport is the gateway to east central Illinois and the State’s flagship university. Its most important asset is the scheduled passenger air service provided to the region. That air service connects Champaign-Urbana and surrounding communities to more than 150 cities around the world with a single stop. Community awareness of the current Air Service options is low and research indicates that travelers often neglect to check CMI as an option based on the perception that fares may be higher and connecting options may be painful.

This marketing strategy is designed to be a guide for all future initiatives. The purpose of this document is to ensure that all airport marketing activities are in line with achievable goals and industry demands.

Marketing Strategy Process

- Use research to develop an understanding of the market dynamics of CMI and surrounding areas;
- Identify a list of proposed program goals and clear strategies to achieve those goals;
- Recommended specific tactics and timelines to move in the direction of implementing the strategies to achieve the goals.

Research and Preparation

- Review of all client-provided research as well as research from other sections of the CMI Strategic Plan;
- Conducted Focus Group sessions with community stakeholders;
- Reviewed/researched other similar-size (benchmark) airports via the Web;

“Willard Airport is the gateway to east central Illinois and the State’s flagship university.”
Conducted soft-sounding research online to capture an online pulse about airport perceptions and understand trends at benchmark airports that might be helpful with our recommendations moving forward.
CLIENT OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM GOALS

Based on conversations with the University, Airport leadership, and the Task Force appointed to chart a future course for the Airport, the following program objectives have been identified:

1. Fill Empty Seats: Increase Overall Passenger Enplanements and Load Factors
   - Retain More Local Passengers: Reduce Leakage
   - Grow Inbound Passengers: Awareness to visitors

2. Land Additional Airline Service
   - Increase airline interest in the airport

3. Focus on both air service development and current/potential customers (retention of existing, and securing of new, services)

4. Identification of unique brand characteristics and brand position/promise

Each of these objectives will be integrated into the main marketing program goals. All recommended marketing tactics are based around these goals in order to best meet the identified client objectives.

The marketing strategy is a living document, therefore there is no rigid priority assigned to each goal. Each program goal is set in place in order to help meet the identified big picture airport objectives. However, a relative scale is indicated with those projects of higher priority generally being closer to the top of the list. It is Sixel’s intention to constantly work toward the various goals, in some fashion, at all times. The Sixel team will work with CMI, the task force and the University to prioritize goals and fine-tune the related tactics following the presentation of this proposed plan. Working together, the airport and University should continually seek opportunities for the airport to achieve the goals and utilize the strategies (see figures 1 and 2 on following pages). Tactics will be prioritized once a working budget is determined.

From time to time, as circumstances warrant, we also expect outside influences to alter the goals. Outside influences which may cause us to adjust the goals include:
Airline industry changes, consolidation and other factors
- Changes to the Air Service make-up of the airport.
- Changes to regional issues such as changes to local business travel patterns or leisure initiatives.

Figure 1: Willard Airport Proposed Marketing Program, High Priority Goals
Source: Sixel Consulting Group, August 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals/Initiatives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Additional Information/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>VERY HIGH PRIORITY &gt;&gt;</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Identify and Develop Airport Brand Platform/ Promise | - Conduct market research;  
- Survey current travelers/stakeholders;  
- Identify findings from the past airport research;  
- Benchmark against similar airports/airport systems;  
- Use Focus Group findings to determine Brand Promise/Marketing Messages. | Start: 3Q 2014  
Ongoing | Purpose: Identification of opportunities that differentiate and define CMI from other airports. This will guide all future marketing and advertising messages. |
| Enhance Air Service Options and Grow Awareness and Visibility to Airlines | - Identify opportunities for growth with new carriers;  
- Establish Airline /Stakeholder relationships;  
- Creation of an Air Service Marketing Toolkit;  
- Identify Event Marketing Opportunities;  
- Creation of new Air Service Incentive;  
- Program and Air Service Promotions Program. | Ongoing | Incentive policy: Recommendation: incentive policy for the airport needs to be revised to reflect industry standards and stay competitive. |
| Drive Travelers to Choose to Travel from CMI (Increase inbound & outbound Awareness) | - Traditional Marketing;  
- Targeted Online Marketing Methods;  
- Website and Social Media Integration/Enhancements;  
- Targeted Community Partnerships;  
- Determine Leakage and Battleground Areas. | Start: 4Q2014  
Expand: 2015 | Develop recommendation of marketing and advertising tactics aimed at driving travelers to choose to travel from CMI. |
| Develop Partnerships & Build Relationships through Corporate & Community Outreach | - Identify opportunities to promote the airport at tourism/economic development events;  
- Participation with the region stakeholders in tourism and trade shows;  
-Begin Corporate Travel Outreach program and explore business travel incentives and co-op airline sales opportunities. | Start: 4Q2014  
Ongoing in 2015 |  |
| Sustain Current Air Service Levels and Increase Passenger Enplanement Levels | - Conduct regular fare comparisons;  
- Increase inbound traffic by partnering with regional organizations;  
- Develop brand awareness with travelers and community;  
- Develop & communicate the Airport brand promise (airlines & pax);  
- Aggressively advertise the brand message that is developed. | Start: 4Q2014  
Ongoing in 2015 | Focus on both ASD marketing efforts and current/potential customers (retention of existing and securing of new services). |
### Figure 2: Willard Airport Proposed Marketing Program, Medium Priority Goals
Source: Sixel Consulting Group, August 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals/Initiatives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Additional Information/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance &amp; target communications to develop brand awareness &amp; Evolve the CMI brand to create brand advocates.</strong></td>
<td>- Introduce email marketing (including target lists/messages); - Use community events &amp; promotions to grow e-database; - Survey travelers via online survey tools; - Educate community/region about what CMI has to offer &amp; importance/impact of airport; - Participate in strategic regional events; - Develop promotional item inventory.</td>
<td>Start: 4Q2014 Ongoing in 2015</td>
<td>Tie-in with regional partnership opportunities and Brand Promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enhance Airport Customer Service Offerings &amp; the Overall Passenger Experience</strong></td>
<td>- Develop customer service incentive program(s) for tenants and employees - Develop a set of Passenger Experience Objectives that are focused on enhancing the brand promises that are developed within the marketing program.</td>
<td>Start: 4Q2014 Ongoing in 2015</td>
<td>Staff/Tenants: Creation of a plan of potential customer service initiatives for airport staff/tenants to encourage the enhancement of the passenger experience at MGM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase non-aeronautical Revenue Opportunities for the Airport</strong></td>
<td>- Promotional activities to increase awareness of offerings; - Incorporation of Strategic Plan recommendations; - Use of new social media elements to encourage repeat visitors.</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>- Explore rewards programs for parking - Opportunities for property development and marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increase local government and community stakeholder perception of the airport as regional transportation asset</strong></td>
<td>- Identify economic impact of Airport on community - Utilize University support to identify the impact that the airport has on the region. - Use findings to increase relationships with government and community stakeholders - Identify opportunities for earned media</td>
<td>Start: 4Q2014 Ongoing in 2015</td>
<td>Creation of a brochure and video web link to showcase findings. - Encourage more local businesses and stakeholders to follow the examples of other states requiring travelers to use local airports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL #1: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP AIRPORT BRAND PLATFORM AND PROMISE

The first step to the marketing program is the identification of opportunities that differentiate and define CMI from competitor airports. The current CMI brand is confusing to the consumer. Before spending additional marketing and advertising resources, it is important to understand if potential and current travelers are identifying with the messaging and with the airport brand.

Steps towards Airport Brand Development

These brand development processes have already been undertaken:

- Develop an understanding of the passenger/traveler lifecycle and the importance of an airport brand platform
- Conduct soft market research
  - Conduct online research for traveler perceptions
  - Focus Groups (July 2014)
- Use Focus Group and online findings to determine Brand Promise/Marketing Messages
- Benchmark against similar airports/airport systems
- Determine leakage and battleground market areas

Understanding the Importance of an Airport Brand Platform

The term “brand” today means how the customer or the public perceives the brand offering – both factually and emotionally. While the “brand name” exists objectively and people can see it, the ‘brand promise’ exists in the mind of passengers and consumers. Increasingly, we see consumers holding brands to higher standards. Reputation has never been more important as customers expect brands to operate in accordance with higher ideals and greater responsibility. Travelers also hold airports and airlines to these same standards. Developing a higher brand value, relative to other airport brands, should stem from the airport’s ability to appeal to passengers with a particular balance of being “meaningful” (meet expectations and generate buy-in), “different” (unique in a positive way) and “salient” (the brand of choice). Figure 3, on the following page, details the elements that are necessary to build a brand that resonates with today’s traveler.
Understanding the Lifecycle of Passengers

Understanding the booking process of potential passengers is important as the airport develops the new airport brand. With developments in technology the average passenger planning and booking process has changes over the past decade. It could be assumed that travelers still follow the same decision making curve, but the process of making that decision and booking a flight has evolved. The first step in the process is to plan and conceptualize a trip. This is now done through online research and by checking with family and friends. The second phase of this process is booking the ticket. This process used to primarily include calling a travel agent. In today’s society, more travelers are turning to online booking tools and the urge for the immediate deal. While the process of traveling and taking a flight has not changed drastically, the expectations of passengers have changed. Passengers now expect brand fulfillment and
are prepared to share their experience with others in a real time manner. The passenger lifecycle is shown in figure 4.

**Figure 4: Passenger Lifecycle**  
*Source: Sixel Consulting Group, August 2014*

**Understanding the Life Cycle of the Passenger**

**Action:**

- **Plan and Conceptualize**: Online research, Recommendations from family/friends  
  - SEO, Targeted Search, Customer Experience

- **Book Travel**: Online/Travel Agencies  
  - SEO, Targeted Search, Flight Path Targeting

- **Experience Travel**: Experience Airport(s) and Airline(s) in real-time  
  - The passenger experience is directly tied to the fulfillment of the brand promise

- **Share Experience**: PAX shares experiences with family/friends  
  - Passenger Experience, Social Media

**Brand Building to Connect with Potential Airline Partners**

The importance of the airport brand also is reflected in airline relations and air service marketing efforts. It is important for the airport to convey the brand message to airline partners. Airline marketing is quite competitive and oftentimes the airport also needs to further develop a brand position to directly target airlines vs the passenger/consumer. By identifying a forward but unique airline brand message, the airport will be able to differentiate itself to airlines and showcase its strengths.
Components of the Airport to Airline Brand Position:

- Attractive Incentive Packages
- Operational Efficiencies
- Cost Savings Opportunities
- Marketing Support
- Location and Proximity

Sixel Consulting is working with CMI to identify Airport-to-Airline brand positions that are unique to the airport and may give the airport a competitive advantage when attracting new air service options and/or equipment and directly relate to the Air Service Master Plan.

Identification of Peer Set / Benchmark Airports

In order to identify airport best practices, an airport peer set has been established. This group includes airports with similar characteristics and challenges to CMI. This benchmark group can allow CMI to better understand best practices as they relate to the various sections of this marketing plan. This Marketing Benchmark Group has been expanded to include airports with industry leading marketing and advertising programs that still fit within the peer set of CMI.

Proposed Marketing Peers / Benchmark Airports:

- San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport – SBP (San Luis Obispo, CA)
- University Park Airport – SCE (State College, PA)
- Central Illinois Regional Airport – BMI (Bloomington, IL)
- Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport – SPI (Springfield, IL)
- General Wayne A. Downing Peoria International Airport – PIA (Peoria, IL)
- Chattanooga Airport - CHA (Chattanooga, TN)
- Toledo Express Airport – TOL (Toledo, Ohio – leakage to large hub DTW)
- Gulfport Biloxi Airport – GPT (Gulfport, MS)
- Capital Region International – LAN (Lansing, MI)
- Evansville Regional Airport - EVV (Evansville, IN)
Retention Marketing Opportunities

The True Market Study that was conducted as part of the Strategic Plan process is also valuable in a marketing capacity and can help provide an understanding of the current market environment. The process includes an analysis of ticket stock from the primary catchment area of the airport, to determine which airports local residents are using when they travel, which airlines they book, and which destinations generate the largest number of passengers and help us to understand what areas need an increased advertising focus.

“...most travelers drive to Indianapolis and the Chicago airports and are likely driving to access non-stop flights.”

Only 33% of passengers traveling to and from the Willard Airport primary catchment area use Willard Airport, itself, with 67% using other airports. Of that 67%, only 6% of those in the region use Bloomington-Normal (BMI). This statistic shows that most travelers drive to Indianapolis and the Chicago airports and are likely driving to access non-stop flights. The True Market Study data will be referenced as we determine where to focus the first phases of the airport advertising program.

The detail of the True Market Study also includes battleground marketing areas. The focus of the first phase of the airport’s advertising and community outreach efforts should lie within the main core catchment areas. Once the program begins to show traction efforts should be made to modify the marketing messages to reach people that are within the battleground areas.

Airport Brand Development and Findings of the July 2014 Focus Groups

Defining the University of Illinois – Willard Airport (CMI)

In July 2014 we conducted two focus group sessions in an effort to understand the regional perceptions around the CMI brand. The focus groups included community leaders and task force members. The focus groups included series of brand development exercises where we sought to identify brand attributes and brand challenges of the Willard Airport. The sessions also sought to determine perceptions around the current airport name and get a pulse for feelings on a potential change to the branded airport name and identity.

**Brand Attributes:** During the focus groups we identified a number of brand attributes and items that we can develop into a brand identity and promise for the airport.
Brand Challenges: The focus group sessions also identified a number of challenges that need to be considered throughout the marketing plan and the development of the CMI brand promise. Some of the challenges can be corrected and overcome and some will need to be managed. Part of the brand development process is to identify ways to connect with travelers and manage expectations and perceptions.

Some challenges, such as Unreliable Service, are perceptions and we will work to manage those perceptions throughout the marketing campaign and program.

Online Research into Passenger Attitudes on CMI: In an effort to understand true passenger perceptions of the challenges and attributes of the airport we conducted soft sounding online research. The research was conducted using the social sharing sites Twitter and YELP. The soft-sounding research has helped us to conclude that the perceptions of the focus group members were similar to the online perceptions of the traveling public.
A set of 25 YELP reviewing travelers identified the following brand attributes:

- “No lines and who needs an executive lounge when you have free WiFi and the whole terminal to yourself?”
- Cute little airport...
- “This airport makes flying pleasurable (or at least tolerable).”
- Convenient / Boarding is efficient
- No lines / Short Queues / No crowds
- Plenty of rental cars
- Close to campus
- Friendly Personnel
- Unchanging: “I will always love CMI”

The YELP reviewing travelers also identified the following brand challenges:

- “Flights to and from Chicago are usually delayed (or canceled.”
- Lack of ground transportation
- Barely any food in terminal
- Hard to get a taxi
- Only one terminal
- Illinois weather is horrible
- No food. No bar.
- Limited airlines/destinations

**Regional Identifiers**

The focus group sessions also listed key regional identification terms. These terms will help the airport to determine which terms should be included in the updated CMI Brand.

- “Willard”
- Wayfinding terms: Champaign, Champaign/Urbana, C-U
- University ties → University of Illinois Airport
- “Micro-Urban” community brand
- Champaign Midwest Illinois Airport
- Champaign Metro
- Champaign Metro – Illinois
- Fly CMI
- East Central Illinois
- Illini
Target Markets

A list of target markets has also been identified in order to ensure that the airport brand relates to all relevant stakeholders and potential passengers.

**Figure 7: Marketing Targets**  
*Source: Sixel Consulting Group, August 2014*

![Diagram of marketing targets]

Brand Options

A new brand and brand promise must consist of a combination of the airport attributes and regional identifiers in an effort to resonate with all potential travelers and stakeholders. The focus group was adamant in a desire to move away from calling the airport “Willard,” saying, although the name means something in the immediate region, it has little meaning beyond Champaign-Urbana. The focus group was mixed on feelings about removing the University of Illinois brand from the airport. In fact, there was generally broad support for ensuring that the airport continues to be associated with the University’s brand.

Based on the suggestions, options, and feedback of the focus group, along with the feedback from various community and University leaders, the following set of brand options has been developed. These are offered without ranking. The Task Force will be charged with choosing a
brand from the four offered in this report. Once the Task Force has selected the brand, a final strategy for the brand’s design and implementation will be developed.

The four suggested brand options include:

1. **Fly Champaign**
   This brand would likely be used in conjunction with the airport’s legal name, University of Illinois-Willard, which will not be changed. The brand would be a stand-alone, and represent the airport. However, the logo would likely include a sub-header with the Airport’s legal name. This brand connects the Airport back to the most recognized community it serves, and the closest major city to its location. It also connects the Airport to its wayfinding term that is found on booking sites and airport information monitors.

2. **Champaign Airport**
   Much like the previous brand option, this brand connects the Airport back to the most recognized community it serves, and the closest major city to its location. It also connects the Airport to its wayfinding term that is found on booking sites and airport information monitors.

3. **FlyCMI**
   This brand would include the retention of the current website address and current marketing brand. It connects the airport to its booking code. The challenge with the brand is that, while it might be recognized in the region, it will not be recognized outside the region. This brand will likely need to be tagged with another brand, such as Champaign Airport, for those outside east central Illinois to understand it.

4. **University of Illinois Airport**
   This brand would re-attach the airport to its ownership. It would also provide an opportunity to develop a logo and brand image that is consistent with the University. It does not, however, offer significant wayfinding, as there are three campuses of the University of Illinois.
GOAL #2: ENHANCE AIR SERVICE OPTIONS AND AWARENESS

In order to enhance air service options for the region, strategic air service marketing objectives must be developed. These strategies will help CMI to increase awareness and to strengthen the competitive position when it comes to route development opportunities. These efforts will help to put CMI “on the map” for airline planners and potential passengers. Many of these strategies were further developed in the Air Service Master Plan Section of this Strategic Plan.

Strategies/Steps:

1. Continuously fine tune the Air Service Master Plan
2. Establish (and/or Grow) Airline /Stakeholder Relationships
3. Creation of New Air Service Incentive Programs and Air Service Promotions Programs for the Airport
4. Air Service Marketing Toolkit
   - Incorporate brand identity/platform of the airport into all airline presentations
   - Introduction of an Air Service/Community Marketing video
   - Highlight competitive advantages of CMI as compared to peer airports
5. Explore Event and Conference Marketing Opportunities
   - Identify opportunities to enhance airport profile at air service and industry events
   - Identify opportunities to host industry events / conferences

Airline and Stakeholder Relationships

Understanding the key decision makers at current and prospective airlines is important when working to enhance air service options. In order to succeed in air service marketing efforts the airport must develop relationships with the key planning personnel from all airlines identified as targets for the airport. While the airport’s consultant already has standing relationships with prospective airlines, it is important for that relationship to also include a member of the airport or University. We also recommend that the airport work with the consultant to establish relationships with airline marketing/PR departments at current carriers. By having the correct marketing, sales, public relations and pricing contacts at each airline the airport can further identify opportunities to market the service. These relationships will be crucial to the success of the CMI marketing program and these contacts can assist in marketing and promotional opportunities and help ensure the success of the corporate outreach program as later identified in this plan.
Air Service Marketing Tool-Kit

Now that the Air Service Master Plan is complete, it is important to connect the Marketing and Brand Strategy Plan with Air Service Development efforts and work to convey the airport brand message and identity in all airline presentations and communications. We recommend that the airport develop an Air Service Marketing Toolkit which will help to incorporate the brand identity/platform of the airport into all airline presentations.

The Toolkit should include a detailed calendar of recommended industry events for the upcoming year and a timeline for pre-conference contact with attending airlines. We recommend that the airports consider attending a minimum of 2-3 airline networking events/conferences each year to ensure that CMI stay at top of the minds of airline planners. In addition to conferences, the airport should plan to meet routinely with airline planners at their headquarters and schedule maintenance conference calls on a regular basis. The airport should also consider the inclusion of seasonal cards and gifts as a part of the air service marketing toolkit and plan.

The Toolkit should also include a PowerPoint/Presentation Template that is unique to CMI and highlights the Airport brand identity. This branded template will help the airport to showcase unique community and airport attributes that differentiate CMI from competing airports. The template should also include a detailed overview of the airport incentive plan and the airport promotions plan. The Air Service Incentives program is defined in the Air Service Master Plan section of the Strategic Plan. Virtually all airports in the United States – and many around the world – provide incentives for new and expanded air service. Air service is, after all, the lifeblood of most airports. Investments in incentive programs, almost always, are paid back in economic impact dollars. The proposed Air Service Promotions Program is a simple document designed around the target carriers. The program will outline promotions, advertising programs and partnerships that are in place at CMI to help the airline to grow confidence in the CMI market. The template should also include airport enhancements, highlight customer service elements and passenger marketing updates.

“We recommend that the airport develop an air service marketing toolkit which will help incorporate the brand identity/platform...”
We also recommend that the Toolkit include an Air Service/Community Marketing Video. Sixel Consulting Group can work with the airport to produce a professional air service development video to highlight the region to airline partners. Air Service Videos help to give a voice to both the airport and to the people who are truly affected by the level of air service, and help them tell their own stories. These videos can also be used in airline presentations and within all online profiles (social media). We recommend a 2-3 minute video for the airport that highlights the community.

**Event and Conference Marketing**

In an effort to enhance the profile of the airport in the eyes of airline decision makers, we recommend that the airport consider available opportunities to highlight CMI at Airline Planning Events and Conferences. This can be something as simple as the sponsorship of delegate items at industry events where airlines will be present to increase awareness about CMI and help to encourage the planners to remember CMI when they return to their offices. Sample Ideas include delegate tote bags and lanyards. There are also additional conference marketing opportunities that can be considered once the airport finalizes budget and staffing.
GOAL #3: INCREASE AWARENESS FOR DRIVE TRAVELERS

Following the associated brand development and creative exercises CMI needs to find the correct channels on which to advertise in order to encourage potential travelers to choose to start and end their trips at CMI. The Airport has done a respectable job within their current, limited budget of marketing and promoting local air service. The high leakage rate to nearby airports paired with a national shift in travel planning demands a new and more complex approach to local air service marketing. An aggressive and multi-layered marketing, promotional and community outreach effort, is proposed for the airport and can be accomplished with the help of this funding.

“The high leakage rate to nearby airports... demands a new and more complex approach to local air service marketing.”

The plan would include a combination of traditional advertising methods and new media methods to advertise the current service while using the brand identity of the airport to resonate with local travelers.

We recommend that the airport utilize the advertising information in this plan to identify a budget. Once that budget is developed we will develop the rest of the advertising plan and refine the Airport’s media strategy to reflect national consumer shift to online travel planning while simultaneously working to advance familiarity with CMI in the local community. The proposed program will aim to support the network carriers with retail advertising through traditional methods while also focusing on defining and communicating the real customer value of flying from CMI to connect onwards as compared to driving to alternative airports. We also recommend that the airport consider website enhancements and social media integration to attract more travelers to the airport.

Advertising Components:

1. Traditional Marketing Methods
   - Utilize traditional advertising and PR methods to connect with potential travelers and create brand awareness
2. **Targeted Online Marketing Methods (New Media Methods)**
   - Targeted approach to reach potential customers when they are in the mindset to book travel.

3. **Community Sponsorships, Promotions (Contests) and Sports Marketing**

4. **Social Media Integration and Enhancements**
   - Develop increased presence on mainstream social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube)
   - Exploration of other social media channels (Instagram, Pinterest, etc).

5. **Website Enhancements that Highlight the Airport Brand Platform and Drive Travelers to Book from CMI and Bring the Customer Experience Online**
   - The airport will should consider incorporating a modest online travel planning calculator to create awareness and attract travelers in the region.

**Media placement should be timed around two main objectives:**
- Fare sales and route advertising
- Brand building and awareness

A combination of traditional advertising methods and targeted online methods should be used to advertise current air service options and convey the brand identity of the airport. We recommend that CMI work to refine the airport’s media strategy to reflect national consumer shift to online travel planning while working to advance familiarity with CMI in the local community. The program should also support key carriers with retail advertising through traditional advertising methods.

**Traditional Advertising and Marketing Methods**

We recommend that the airport utilize a combination of traditional advertising and public relations methods paired with targeting online and new media methods. The goal of the program should be to connect and re-connect with potential travelers while also increasing brand awareness within the region. Components of the traditional advertising portion of the plan will include: Radio Advertising, TV Advertising, Out-of-Home (billboard advertising), and Local Online Advertising. On-air/TV spend may be focused on premium placement such as weather and traffic sponsorships to ensure maximum value and the largest audience reach available. We also recommend that the airport will also work to develop brand specific television commercials which will be incorporated into the on-air placements and also used in on-line pre-roll elements of the media plan. The inclusion of traditional media placement will
allow the airport to support local media outlets while enhancing relationships with local media partners. The described traditional advertising elements should be timed around specific program objectives including the incorporation of airline fare sales and specific efforts around Airport brand building and local awareness. Recommended media outlets will be determined once the advertising budget is finalized. While consumer trends have shifted to online travel planning, by continuing to include some traditional marketing methods the airport can support local media outlets and enhance relationships.

**Targeted Online and New Media Advertising Methods**

We recommend that the media plan also include targeting online and new media advertising methods. These efforts will incorporate a combination of: Advanced Keyword Targeting, Flight Path Advertising (targeted advertising on Online Travel Agencies), Search Engine Marketing (Google/Bing Networks), Pandora and Hulu. These advertising methods will be aimed at targeting the potential passenger when they are in the mindset to travel. Targeting online advertising will help the airport to reach travelers by incorporating airport / travel related keywords paired with geographical and behavioral targeting. When a geo-targeted traveler searches for specific airport defined words they will be redirected to an airport related ad while surfing on common news sites. When the user searches for specific words they will be redirected to an airport related ad while surfing on common news sites at a time later in the day. Flight Path targeting utilizes online travel agency sites and advertises to the travel that is searching for a flight from a competing airport.

With the area being home to a large number of college students, Hulu and Pandora can reach a certain demographic in an attempt to boost ridership as families and other relatives visit their loved one in the area during their college years.

**Social Media Integration and Website Enhancements**

By building an online brand presence through social media and website enhancements the airport can forge a stronger connection with its travelers. Ongoing, open communication on these channels can help to foster a trust within the online travel community. By creating channels for one-on-one communication with airport travelers we can work to humanize the airport travel experience and create customers for life, rather than advertising acquaintances.

**“By building an online brand presence through social media… the airport can forge a stronger connection with its travelers.”**
This social media program will allow the airport to have a conversation with past, present and future travelers, rather than simply allowing travelers to have a conversation about the airport, with no airport involvement. The proposed marketing strategy program will work to develop a stronger presence on mainstream social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) and explore potential opportunities on newer mediums such as location based tools, Pinterest and Instagram.

The program will also look into website enhancements that will help to highlight the Airport brand platform in conjunction with the new website the Airport currently has under design. In the section below we have identified best practices as it pertains to airports will be suggested in order to ensure the new website meets the needs of the traveler. The enhancements are focused on encouraging travelers to book flights from CMI.

A Travel Cost Calculator (see figure 8) may also be incorporated into the enhancement program and will be aimed at educating local travelers of the true cost involved with traveling from CMI versus the cost of driving and parking at a competing airport. The sample below is an example of what it may look like when finalized; final design will be determined pending the outcome of the grant. We recommend a full website assessment and re-design to ensure that the site fits with the newly developed airport brand and acts as a portal for the airport brand.

**Community Sponsorships, Promotions (Contests) and Sports Marketing**

Community sponsorships and partnerships are also an important component of the overall airport advertising program. The Airport’s strong tie with the University of Illinois suggests a natural partnership for all University sports advertising opportunities. In game promotions and signage can help to ensure that the airport is top of mind to all student, faculty and staff. The program will also help the airport to reach visiting teams and keep CMI top of mind for their return visits. We recommend the inclusion of ticket giveaways and tabling during at least 3-4 athletics events throughout the year. After identifying opportunities with the University athletic programs, we recommend that the airport also look to find other community event opportunities. The airport
brand should aim to be present at a minimum of 3-4 community partner events throughout the year.

**University Sports Partnership Opportunities**

- Promotional table at key athletic events showcasing the airport offerings and providing a chance for fans to sign up to win a trip from CMI.
- Inclusion of airport give-away items to fans

**Importance of Social Media Engagement**

By building an online brand presence through social media the airport can forge a stronger connection with the traveling public. Ongoing, open communication on these channels can help to foster a trust within the online community. If communities begin to expect the airport to provide information and content on social sites, the communities will also know to turn to the airport channels in the event of an incident or emergency situation. By creating channels for one-on-one communication with airport travelers we can work to humanize the airport travel experience and create customers for life, rather than advertising acquaintances. This social media program will allow the airport to have a conversation with past, present and future travelers, rather than simply allowing travelers to have a conversation about the airport, with no airport involvement.

**Value of Social Media**

The value of regular social media interaction is the ability to ensure the community stays engaged with airport. The interaction keeps the airport top of mind and helps the airport to grow brand advocates and interest in offerings and airlines. Social media channels also provide a tool to educate travelers on CMI offerings including new routes, airline fare sales/promotions and a platform to host contests and promotions. Social media also provides an additional channel for targeted paid advertising. The marketing and advertising plan will also include targeted Facebook, Twitter and Instagram advertising.

Each social media outlet represents the opportunity to interact with a different set of users:

- **Facebook** – Largest platform. Broad demographic reach. Allows for promoted posts and inexpensive targeted advertising. Opportunity for airline/airport
- **Twitter** – Connect with customers and monitor competition; share real-time information. Customer service and crisis communications tool.
YouTube – Share videos of events, announcements, testimonials, behind-the-scenes activities.

Blog or Podcast – provide behind-the-scenes peek at airport. Great tool for website optimization.

Foursquare – Location-based tool with coupons, contests and inexpensive loyalty programs. Opportunity to reward travelers for coming back to CMI through Facebook/Foursquare check-ins.

Pinterest – Reach travelers during the planning phase of travel.

Instagram – Pictures speak volumes. Interact with travelers.

We recommend that the airport first work to develop a CMI Facebook and explore the use of Twitter. The airport is currently listed on Facebook as a Facebook location. There is information up about the airport but the airport is not managing the information or taking the opportunity to connect with travelers through a true Facebook page. Once the airport becomes established on these mainstream social media platforms (Facebook/Twitter) they can develop regular, compelling posts to keep consumers and airlines engaged with the brand. The airport can also utilize advertising capabilities on both platforms for targeted marketing as indicated in the sample budget section of this plan. Once the airport is established and set up on mainstream social media platforms the next step is to explore opportunities to integrate new social media channels into the marketing mix. It is in this phase of the program that the airport should explore Pinterest, Foursquare, Instagram and YouTube. There are several immediate ways that the airport can begin its engagement with social travelers. Recommended tactics include:

- Host a contest to increase buy-in and activity on the page
- Ensure all posts contain images: given higher priority in Facebook algorithms
- Ask questions, post trivia, share archival images to increase opportunity for dialogue
- Offer free Wi-Fi for passengers who “like” the airport on Facebook
- Integrate promoted posts into the social media plan in order to access individuals who are not currently following the airport on social media.

Based on these recommendations, a preliminary placement plan and budget has been developed for Willard Airport in 2015, seen in figure 9 on the following page.
### Champaign Marketing and Advertising Budget (CMI)
#### 2015 Sample Program and Recommendation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>% of Ad Buy</th>
<th>DIFFERENCE</th>
<th>BUDGETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sale Dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRADITIONAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV/Local Online News</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print/Local Publications/Local Online News</td>
<td>13.10%</td>
<td>$5,500.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of Home/Billboards</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONLINE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Targeting Networks</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Advertising (Google/Yahoo/Bing)</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora/Hulu</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Advertising (Targeting)</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>$3,500.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADVERTISING SUB-TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$71,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OUTREACH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>BUDGETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Outreach Program (Outreach Support Staff, Incentives)</td>
<td>$20,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions/Contests</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports/Community Event Sponsorships</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTREACH SUB-TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$42,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER MARKETING COMPONENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>BUDGETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email Marketing Program</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Production (TBD)</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updated Creative Content</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional Collateral / Print Items</td>
<td>$5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Marketing Support Staff</td>
<td>$40,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mics/Other Items</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARKETING SUB-TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>$62,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BUDGETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$175,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GOAL #4: DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS/COMMUNITY OUTREACH

By further developing partnerships with local economic development, government, tourism partners and local corporations, the airport can maximize related partnership marketing efforts. Partnerships will help the airport to grow and maintain a solid image and reputation as strategic air transportation leader in the region.

Steps in Building Partnerships

1. **Identify opportunities to promote the airport at tourism/development events**

   Tourism and development partnerships are key to the airport’s efforts to grow community and corporate support. As previously identified, the airport should engage all local Chambers of Commerce (including those outside the local county in order to ensure that the airport has a presence at Chamber and Economic Development events. The airport is an asset to the region and should take the opportunity to host or sponsor chamber and economic development events. The airport should also aim to have a presence at networking events and send a representative to participate in events and activities.

2. **Identify opportunities to promote the airport at University related events and maximize partnership**

   The Airport is in a fortunate position to have a strong partner like the University. If the University wants the airport to succeed and begin to meet the goals of this program the University would be well suited to partner with the airport on enhancement and promotional opportunities.

   University/Airport promotions and collaboration might include:
   - Sports Partnerships
   - Student and Faculty Giveaways and ticket promotions.
   - New Student Orientation Information
   - Increased promotion on school travel site

   The Airport and University should work together to identify opportunities to highlight CMI in University travel communications. The airport should have the opportunity to utilize the influence of the University to change local travel policy to encourage all business travelers to check CMI first when booking airfare. The current Travel Policy on the University website reads:
“In accordance with University policy and the convenience of the traveler, employees must seek the lowest available fare when making commercial airline reservations. To obtain the best fares, airline tickets should be purchased as soon as department authorization is received, preferably a minimum of three weeks prior to departure.”

A simple modification to the language will help to encourage more users to check CMI when booking airfare. Suggested language would be:

“In accordance with University policy and the convenience of the traveler, employees must seek the lowest available fare when making commercial airline reservations. To obtain the best fares and to stay in the best interest of the University, travelers should check flight options from the University’s Champaign Airport (CMI) as a first option. If the airfare from Champaign is within $150 difference of the fares from alternate airports the ticket from Champaign should be purchased to save on government mileage and ground transportation fees. Airline tickets should be purchased as soon as department authorization is received, preferably a minimum of three weeks prior to departure.”

“A simple modification to the language will help to encourage more users to check CMI when booking airfare.”

If the airport is successful in working with the University to change perceptions about traveling from CMI and encouraging faculty and staff to, at a minimum, at least always check CMI first when booking air travel, the airport will be able to take that success at share it with airline partners.

3. Potential Tourism Opportunities:

The airport can also maximize outreach efforts by working with the Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Champaign) to partner on booth space and marketing collateral for the region.

The airport should try to have a presence whenever local partners are promoting the region and talking to potential visitors. By joining or partnering with the CVB the airport can work to enhance the CMI profile on event and Visit Champaign marketing materials.
4. **Corporate Outreach and Initial Identification of Business Travel Opportunities**

We recommend that the airport/Chamber focus on the core catchment area during the first 6 months of the advertising and outreach program. After evaluating progress the airport can then decide whether to increase efforts into battleground market areas. Business travel is a huge component in stopping leakage from CMI. We recommend for CMI work on developing a corporate travel program and reach out to travel planners of corporations to get more employees to fly from CMI.

By identifying top employers in the region, the airport can begin conversations with the correct corporate sales contacts. We recommend that the airport work directly with the Chamber of Commerce to begin an outreach effort to Chamber members to provide the airport/Chamber with the names and contact information of the individual responsible to travel planning. By working with Chamber, University and community partners the airport should be able to identify travel managers and travel contacts at the top 50 corporations in the region. Once the corporations are identified, we recommend that the airport work directly with community partners to reach out C-Suite contacts at each organization to explain the goals of the programs. Once that outreach has taken place the request for the correct travel planning contact should be made.

This process should begin during Fourth Quarter 2014 and the next step in the program is to set up a blitz calendar for corporate visits during 1Q 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>13,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carle Clinic Association</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>2,919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Carle Foundation Hospital</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>2,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Champaign Unit #4 School District</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>1,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kraft Foods, Inc.</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parkland College</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provena Covenant Medical Center</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kirby Foods, Inc.</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Christie Clinic, P.C.</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Urbana School District #116</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Jeld-Wen</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Rantoul</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Devonshire Group LLC</td>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Amdocs</td>
<td>High Tech</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bartlett Management Services, Inc.</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Savoy</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>City of Champaign</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Tri Star Marketing</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Health Alliance Medical Plans</td>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>Urbana</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mahomet-Seymour Community School Dist. #3</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Mahomet</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Horizon Hobby, Inc.</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>News-Gazette</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Human Kinetics</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Champaign</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Conair</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Rantoul</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 10: Top Employers in the Champaign Region
Source: Champaign County EDC, 2013*
Retention of Core Business Travelers to/from Key Destinations:
The meetings with the corporate travel planners will help the airport to identify challenges and opportunities for shifting share of local corporate travel to and from Champaign. The airport will also be able to use findings and relationships to open conversations with airline(s) to increase first class options from CMI. The program will use relationship building tactics and incentives to encourage travel managers to change travel policies to require that all travelers Check CMI before booking from another airport. Once initial contact has been made the airport can identify opportunities for incentive programs and/or free parking options for corporations promising a minimum number of trips from CMI in 2015.

Partnership with University Contracted Travel Agencies
The travel section of the University website lists three contracted travel agencies. It is our recommendation that the airport work directly with the University to meet with these three travel agencies and discuss opportunities to encourage more University employees begin the travel process by checking CMI. If possible, we recommend that the University mandate that the agencies, at a minimum, check CMI first before booking the flight option that best fits with the other travel policies of the school.

Contracted University Travel Agencies

Franklin Travel  
Franklin Travel Booking Page

Hobbit Travel  
Hobbit Travel Booking Page

Suzi Davis Travel  
Suzi Davis Travel Booking Page

Education of Corporate Travel Managers on American’s Business Extra™ Program
As part of the corporate outreach program, we recommend that the airport educate all local travel managers and companies about the American Airlines Business Programs. With the Business Extra™ program, a company can earn points toward valuable traveler awards while the employee continues to earn his or her AAdvantage miles. It is free and easy for companies of any size to join. Companies that enroll can ensure that they are getting the most for their traveler spend. Following the American Airlines – US Airways merger, the combined carrier has consolidated and downsized their corporate sales department. Prior to the merger there was a dedicated team of American Airlines Sales Managers focused on regional markets like CMI. With the consolidation that focused effort has gone away and it is the airport’s responsibility to take on the corporate sales role within the community.
**Informational Surveys**

In an effort to reach all local corporations prior to setting up a meeting blitz, the airport may want to consider a corporate travel survey. Through this program participants will be asked to complete a survey via Constant Contact or via a downloadable PDF. Survey will inquire about interest in participation in future meetings to discuss the findings. Survey questions will include corporate travel trends, yearly travel spend and airline loyalty. This type of program can be useful when staffing levels are limited. It provides initial outreach to the corporations with the promise of a formal follow up meeting.

**Corporate Travel Advisory Board**

Corporate Travel Advisory Boards are common in marketing centric airport environments when the airport is tied into the local community and committed to maintaining corporate support. This type of program can be developed to include monthly or quarterly meetings that allow the members to weigh in on airport and airline development efforts. These programs are typically started as a way to provide a sounding board for local corporate travel managers to voice concerns and recommendations to the airport. Common feedback might be schedule changes, key routes to the company and customer service comments. These groups provide an opportunity for members to offer valuable feedback on the airport with the expectation that it will help the airport to solve the leakage problem that exists at CMI today.

**Partner Collaboration Through Social Media**

By collaborating with other tourism authorities the airport can use local attractions to make its social media profiles more appealing. Shared posts and photos can increase interest by passengers and allow the airport to show off community features. It is also important to partner with all CMI airlines and share relevant airline posts and information.

**Membership in Business Travel Organizations**

By joining and engaging with the regional chapter of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) the Airport/Chamber can ensure access to travel managers throughout the country who are planning business travel to and from the Champaign catchment area.
Increasing enplanement levels is a goal and metric that will be behind each step of the marketing program – both airport to airline marketing and airport to passenger marketing activities will be focused on identifying opportunities to grow the passenger base. Most of these strategies are outlined within other sections of this plan – but relate to multiple goals. There are a number of things that the airport should be doing on a regular basis in order to meet this goal.

1. **Conduct Regular Fare Comparisons of Peer Set Airports**
   A simple search on an online travel tool (e.g.: Kayak) can help CMI understand pricing in the competitive market. This insight helps to determine if a shift in paid media presence is necessary or if conversations need to be held with airline partners to try to adjust pricing in the market. An airport staff member or dedicated marketing liaison or consultant should regularly conduct these comparison to maintain an understanding for marketing dynamics and shifts.

2. **Keep a Pulse on Regional Attitudes Regarding the Airport**
   The airport needs to consistently monitor news outlets to keep a pulse on regional attitudes about CMI. Google Alerts provides a free and simple tool to monitor all online news mentions of the airport and its airlines. There are other, more costly media clipping services, but Google Alerts should provide a free way for the airport to catch news items pertaining to both the airport and to American Airlines.

3. **Increase Inbound Traffic by Partnering with Regional Organizations**
   In the previous section we made the recommendation of working with regional organizations with the goal of increasing awareness about the airport. As part of those partnerships the airport should also work to communicate with each organization about airport news and updates. This will help to ensure that the airport is mentioned in membership correspondence and that all positive news is highlighted in targeted communications.
GOAL #6: ENHANCE AND TARGET BRAND COMMUNICATIONS

It is important to develop targeted communications to travelers and to stakeholders as part of the marketing mix for the airport. We recommend that the airport use local promotional opportunities to build an email database of interested travelers and then communicate with those groups on a regular basis.

1. **Explore Email Marketing Opportunities (targeted lists and messaging)**
   CMI should use community events and airline ticket giveaways and promotions to grow and populate an e-database. Once this list is developed, it is important for the airport to develop targeted communications for the various types of travelers. This will provide a way for us to reach specific individuals with messages that relate to their travel needs. The airport should develop a quarterly newsletter to update subscribers about the airport and also send out specific messages as demanded by market dynamics. Target lists could include: Fare Sales and Specials, Construction and Development Updates, Airlines Updates (Corporate Sales).

2. **Conduct Regular Surveys of Travelers**
   An email database will also help the airport to conduct quarterly online surveys as defined in research section. This will help the airport to continue to understand passenger needs and also gauge the effectiveness of the marketing program and campaign.

3. **Educate Communities / Regions about What CMI Has to Offer as Well as the Economic Impact of the Airport**
   We recommend that the airport develop a speakers forum/calendar of local events that the airport could key note to speak about the impact and importance of the airport. By producing a presentation template and eye-catching handout, the airport representative could easily reach large groups of people at one time and work to highlight the impact that the airport has on the entire community. The airport’s consultant can assist in the development process of the presentation and collateral. The airport should also take advantage of any opportunities to be mentioned in Chamber/Partner newsletters/publications.
GOAL #7: ENHANCE AIRPORT PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

An airport brand is only as solid as the promise it lives up to in the eyes of the passenger. Passenger experience is a huge component of airport marketing and must be incorporated into the marketing strategy. Recommendations are powerful and in today's connected and social world, a customer experience gone wrong can quickly break the reputation of an airport brand.

By identifying customer touch-points within the airport the airport can work to integrate those points into the development of the airport brand. Airport management and staff need to all be tied together with the goal of highlighting the brand promise in the experiences shown to passengers. By cultivating relationships with terminal partners, the airports will be able to enhance their ability to provide a seamless and positive passenger experience. Recommended items include:

- Develop incentive program(s) for tenants and employees that exemplify the airport brand in their daily work. This program could include taxi and ground transportation operators.
- Creation of a plan of potential customer service initiatives for airport staff/tenants to encourage the enhancement of the passenger experience at CMI.
- Develop a process for providing personal support to solve customer concerns including those that are expressed through social media.
- Incorporate Social Media into customer service plan.

"...the goal of highlighting the brand promise in the experiences shown to passengers."
GOAL #8: INCREASE PASSENGER-DRIVEN AIRPORT REVENUE

Marketing opportunities do not stop with efforts to get passengers to fly through the airport terminals. Marketing opportunities within the airport also need to be identified. The Strategic Options section of the Strategic Plan includes a number of non-aeronautical revenue opportunities. It is important to include non-aeronautical revenue marketing in the Marketing Plan.

Proven Airport Strategies and Opportunities to Explore:

- **Promotional activities to increase awareness of tenant offering** including a rewards programs for parking should be explored. By including a parking rewards program we can encourage repeat airport visitors and also mitigate the perception of free parking at Bloomington Normal (BMI). For a small fee the airport can reward travelers for each dollar spent at the airport using airline frequent flier miles or another type of reward generation program. Research has shown us that the average traveler is not driving to BMI for free parking, though the perception in the community is that people do make that drive based on parking. By including a rewards component, CMI can encourage more business travelers to fly (and park) at CMI and use the rewards program as an incentive. The program would also allow the airport to track traveler frequency and communicate via a targeted email marketing campaign to all registered users.

- **The use of social media to encourage repeat visitors is also recommended.** The airport can inexpensively set up a Foursquare and/or Facebook check-in program to reward travelers for actions in the airport. An example of this would be free parking coupons with the use of a check-in program.
GOAL #9: INCREASE PERCEPTION OF AIRPORT AS A REGIONAL ASSET

Airports are economic engines and are also assets to the local community. Developing and building the perception of the airport as a regional transportation asset will help in both passenger and air service marketing efforts.

Identify Opportunities for Earned Media
Earned media coverage is an essential and powerful tool to an integrated marketing communications program. Earned media often carries more weight and credibility in the minds of travelers than paid advertising because it is viewed through a news reporter. We recommend that the airport include a proactive approach to earned media as part of the marketing strategy. Earned media opportunities will help us to build the profile and message around the updated CMI brand. Successful earned media programs take dedicated outreach and we recommend that the airport assign a specific representative to manage all earned media opportunities. This person can be part of the airport staff or contracted as part of the overall marketing strategy program. Press releases and announcements are just one component of a successful media relations program. Follow up and relationship building will determine the success of the program.

Incorporation of University Support to Change Community Booking Patterns
The Check CMI First concept will not mandate change but it will increase awareness by keeping CMI top of mind and will encourage more travelers to consider CMI over other air travel options.

1. **Utilize the influence of the University to change local travel policy to encourage all local corporations to require business travelers to check CMI first when booking airfare.**
   - Use findings to increase relationships with government and community stakeholders
   - Creation of a brochure and video web link to showcase findings.

2. **Grow Community Support and Educate on Importance of Air Service**
   - Encourage more local businesses and stakeholders to follow the example of the State of Alabama in requiring travelers to use state airports.
Capitalize on Chamber and Economic Development Partnerships

The airport is an economic engine for the region and without it the community and University would struggle to attract new businesses and talent. By working with key partners the airport can spread the message to the rest of the region and increase awareness and buy-in by travelers. We recommend that the airport brainstorm with these organizations to develop a yearly promotion for airport support.
APPENDIX ONE: EXAMPLES OF CORPORATE OUTREACH PROGRAMS

There are several examples of corporate outreach efforts at Peer/Benchmark Airports.

**Gulfport Biloxi Airport (GPT) Business Elite Program** – GPT launched a program which caused major corporations to realize the cost savings of flying from GPT versus driving. The program resulted in a travel policy change requiring travelers to book from GPT.

**Focused Approach = Results**

- Targeted largest companies
- Focused rewards on the individual decision
- Accelerated mileage/promotional Period
- Result: Change in travel Policy
- ROI
- Strengthened relationships with key stakeholders

*Figure 11: GPT Business Elite Program Source: Gulfport Biloxi Airport*

*Figure 12: GPT Business Elite Program Source: Gulfport Biloxi Airport*
Capital Region International (LAN, Lansing, MI) – Mid-Michigan Business Travel Coalition (Formerly Business Travel Trust)

The Mid-Michigan Business Travel Coalition exists to promote Lansing as the first choice for business and the Capital Region International Airport as the first choice for business and personal travel. The Mid Michigan Business Travel Coalition consists of more than 200 businesses, governmental and educational organizations. The group represents many of the largest employers in the region and also includes small businesses.

Members include:

- Michigan State University
- Auto-Owners
- Capitol National Bank
- Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Cooley Law School
- Dart Container
- Neogen
- Emergent Biosolutions
- Spartan Motors
- Bekum America
- State of Michigan
- Farm Bureau Insurance Company
- Jackson National Life Insurance

Figure 13: Mid-Michigan Business Travel Coalition
Source: Capital Region International Airport

Why You Should Join:

- Lend your voice to a united business community fighting for air service that is needed to support economic growth in our region
- Be the first to receive airline fare alerts
- Have an opportunity to speak directly to the airlines
- Receive discounts and service perks at Capital Region International Airport
APPENDIX TWO: SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Akron-Canton Airport – CAK (Ohio)

#LUVCAK: In an effort to increase local travelers to buy into the AirTran/Southwest integration and change over at CAK, the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce partnered with the Greater Akron Chamber, Akron/Summit CVB, Stark Development Board, and Canton/Stark CVB to support Akron-Canton Airport’s (CAK) newest airline partner, Southwest Airlines®. The partnership was formed to help demonstrate the community’s commitment to Southwest and to help ensure their long-term growth and success right here at home. Southwest is also present in Cleveland, 55 miles up the road. Prior to the merger, AkrTran was unique to the Akron-Canton community.

→ The partnership included a 12-week campaign where the group gave out sixty (60) $100 vouchers on Southwest.

→ $100 vouchers were also given out to 900 attendees of the Canton Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting.

→ Over 1,000 vouchers were given out to attendees of the Akron Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting.

Figure 14: #LUVCAK Partners
Source: Akron-Canton Airport

GET on board WITH US

CANTON REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Space provided by: The Repository
Welcome to #LUVCAK!

The Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce is partnering with the Greater Akron Chamber, Akron/Summit CVB, Stark Development Board, and our own Canton/Stark CVB to support Akron-Canton Airport's (CAK) newest airline partner, Southwest Airlines®. We are spreading the great news of their award-winning customer service and lower fares.

What is #LUVCAK? It’s a grassroots campaign to reward you for supporting Southwest Airlines at CAK, our airport. If you join Rapid Rewards® and book your CAK flights at Southwest.com, you will help us preserve lower fares for all of Northeast Ohio, at Akron-Canton Airport.

Southwest Airlines has shown strong commitment to our community, and now it is our turn to demonstrate our commitment to this carrier, to help ensure their long-term growth and success right here at home.

Be on the lookout for a joint letter signed by all of us to rollout the #LUVCAK campaign. Your package will include important information about what makes Southwest Airlines the most sought after airline in the country. We’ll also be visiting companies and attractions throughout the Akron-Canton region. Please welcome our teams and their important message of low fares. Thanks, as always, for your support. We #LUVCAK and hope you will too.

Spread the #LUVCAK today:

1. Head to [www.luvcak.com](http://www.luvcak.com) and sign up for Rapid Rewards®.
2. What’s in it for you? Lots! You could win a $100 Southwest travel voucher just for signing up for Rapid Rewards. We will select five winners every week for the next 12 weeks, sixty winners in all. Whoa – that’s a lot! And what’s more, one lucky winner will get four roundtrip tickets aboard Southwest (to any city they fly to in the U.S.)
3. Share the #LUVCAK by tweeting and posting on Facebook and any of your other social networks that you are feeling the LUV!

Remember, Southwest flights and low fares are available online ONLY at [southwest.com](http://southwest.com). Southwest flights cannot be booked at Travelocity, Expedia, Cheap Tickets, Kayak or any other source. And, two bags fly free (weight and size restrictions apply), when you book your AirTran or Southwest flight at [www.southwest.com](http://www.southwest.com).

Excited? Then sign up at [www.luvcak.com](http://www.luvcak.com) and share the LUV!

Already a member of Rapid Rewards? No problem! Just [click here](http://clickhere) and send us your rapid rewards number for verification and you can be entered to win big.
Figure 16: #LUVCAK Community Update
Source: Akron-Canton Airport

#LUVCAK Community Update

We are halfway there! This is week 6 of the communitywide #LUVCAK campaign to support Southwest Airlines and keep airfares low at Akron-Canton Airport (CAK). Southwest offers nonstop flights to Atlanta, Boston, New York, Orlando, Denver, Tampa and Ft. Myers (seasonal). That’s a whole lot of savings.

We still need you! If you haven’t yet enrolled in Rapid Rewards® (enrollment is free), fly to www.LUVCAK.com today. You could win one of sixty $100 LUV Vouchers! What’s more, one lucky winner will receive four round-trip tickets aboard Southwest Airlines from CAK!


Excited? Share the #LUVCAK by tweeting and posting on Facebook and any of your other social networks that you are feeling the LUV! And thanks.
Join us on April 24 for our #LUVCAK Bash, the culmination of our three-month-long grassroots effort led by the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Akron-Canton Airport and strategic regional partners.

The #LUVCAK Bash will be a special edition of the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce’s popular Stir After Hours. Come mix with business connections old and new as we join forces with our campaign partners: Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, Akron/Summit CVB, Canton/Stark CVB, Stark Development Board, The Repository, and of course the Akron-Canton Airport.