



ROCKY MOUNTAINEER®

ROCKY MOUNTAINEER: EMPLOYER BRANDING AND TRADE RECRUITMENT

Research Proposal

Prepared for

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Summary

This research addresses the critical issue of recruiting skilled workers for seasonal roles at Rocky Mountaineer, a luxury tourist train service in Canada. The study will focus specifically on attracting workers to Kamloops, British Columbia, by examining the company's current employer branding strategy and its effectiveness in appealing to this target group. Through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), this research will explore existing branding elements such as website content, social media, job postings, employee feedback and testimonials.

The objective is to recommend strategies to enhance the company's appeal as an employer while defining a target market audience. Ultimately, the findings aim to strengthen Rocky Mountaineer's brand as a premier employer in the luxury travel sector and improve its ability to attract skilled tradespeople for seasonal positions in Kamloops.

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is vital to Canada's economy, accounting for 10% of employment in this sector and approximately 4% of the country's GDP. Organizations such as Rocky Mountaineer, a luxury train experience provider, are actively working to address this issue. They are implementing innovative strategies aimed at attracting and retaining talent in the trade and hospitality sectors. These initiatives often focus on creating appealing work environments, offering professional development opportunities, and providing competitive compensation and benefits to make the sector more attractive to potential employees. Efforts like this support workforce sustainability and enhance the quality of service provided, which is vital for maintaining Canada's global reputation as a premier tourism destination.

By offering a thorough analysis of Rocky Mountaineer's rivals and suggesting tactics to enhance the company's reputation in the upscale tourist industry and increase its capacity to draw in qualified tradespeople for seasonal jobs in Kamloops, this study seeks to close that gap.

Project Description

This research proposal aims to find possibilities and compare them to competitors in recruiting seasonal tradesmen for Rocky Mountaineer and drawing workers to Kamloops, British Columbia. The study will evaluate existing branding materials to find prospects for Rocky Mountaineer in the trades and hospitality industries. The idea will also investigate and identify rivals to Rocky Mountaineer and how this increases the industry's appeal to prospective workers. Lastly, a SWOT analysis with specific tactics and deadlines will be used to examine these opportunities. This proposal offers practical suggestions to help Rocky Mountaineer recruit skilled craftspeople to its Kamloops site.

Literature Review

The literature review will examine previous studies on branding materials such as social media, websites, job advertisements, and employee reviews. Combining data from case studies and industry research, a SWOT analysis will also identify prospects and compare Rocky Mountaineer to its rivals.

The evaluation will point out research gaps, highlight the present status of trade sector opportunities, and make recommendations for contributions to Rocky Mountaineer's industry and hospitality sectors. The formulation of important research questions and hypotheses will be based on this review.

Research Questions:

1. What strategies can Rocky Mountaineer employ to attract tradespeople to Kamloops, British Columbia?
2. How can Rocky Mountaineer effectively address the talent pipeline for this demographic?
3. In what locations within Kamloops can tradespeople be found?
4. How does Rocky Mountaineer benchmark against competitors?
5. What opportunities have been highlighted in this proposal, mainly through a SWOT analysis?
6. How can Rocky Mountaineer enhance its employer branding to appeal to tradespeople in Kamloops?

This proposal aims to explore opportunities for employer branding aimed at attracting tradespeople to Kamloops at Rocky Mountaineer. The research will encompass a comprehensive review of company websites, social media, job postings, industry reports, and employee feedback to identify potential improvements to the Rocky Mountaineer brand. Moreover, this proposal will delineate opportunities through a SWOT analysis and benchmark against the competitors of Rocky Mountaineer, outlining specific strategies and timelines.

Methodology:

The research will employ a qualitative methodology to collect insights from important stakeholders, such as Rocky Mountaineer representatives, relevant websites, social media, job postings, and industry experts. Data collection techniques include interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Sample selection will focus on sources that provide pertinent data regarding the Rocky Mountaineer brand. For data analysis, thematic coding and pattern recognition will uncover opportunities and gaps in trade roles for the Kamloops Rocky Mountaineer.

Data collection and analysis:

Data sources will include websites, social media posts, job postings, and relevant reports. Data collection will utilize structured research methods and data analysis software. The validity and reliability of the data will be ensured through triangulating sources and conducting member checks. Analytical techniques, such as thematic analysis and content analysis, will be employed to extract meaningful insights.

Expected results and contributions:

The research aims to give Rocky Mountaineer a detailed overview of employer branding opportunities for attracting and retaining tradespeople in Kamloops. It will highlight effective marketing and branding practices and proven strategies for drawing skilled tradespeople to the area. The results will add to the knowledge surrounding Rocky Mountaineer's initiatives in tourism and provide actionable recommendations for strengthening its employer branding process.

Implications and Contributions to Knowledge

Implications and contributions to knowledge by recommending that Rocky Mountaineer explore additional opportunities and sources to attract candidates/applicants in the trades sector, explicitly highlighting the unique location of Kamloops and effectively utilizing marketing channels to employ and maintain tradespersons for seasonal positions at Rocky Mountaineer. This research proposal aims to contribute significantly to the organization's employer branding initiatives. The implications of leveraging these opportunities for tradespeople include:

1. **Local Outreach:** Partnering with local trade schools, colleges, and employment agencies in Kamloops to promote job openings. Hosting job fairs and information sessions to help attract local talent.
2. **Online Presence:** Utilizing social media and job boards to reach a wider audience. Platforms like LinkedIn, Indeed, and local job boards could effectively attract candidates.
3. **Thompson Rivers University (TRU) - School of Trades and Technology:** TRU offers various foundation and apprenticeship training programs in multiple trades, including automotive service, carpentry, heavy mechanical, and more. They have strong industry connections and provide hands-on training with experienced instructors.
4. **Trades Training BC:** This consortium includes 15 public post-secondary institutions across British Columbia, promoting trades training and offering various programs. Partnering with them could help reach a broader audience of potential candidates.

Tradespeople in Kamloops can be found in various online groups and communities. Here are some places where they might connect and network:

1. **Meetup Groups:** There are several Meetup groups where tradespeople might gather in Kamloops. These groups often host events and provide opportunities for networking and professional development.
2. **Facebook Groups:** Many tradespeople join local Facebook groups related to their specific trade or industry. These groups can be great for sharing job opportunities, advice, and resources.
3. **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a valuable platform for professional networking. Tradespeople can join industry-specific groups, connect with peers, and stay updated on job postings and industry news.
4. **Local Trade Associations:** Organizations like the Kamloops Chamber of Commerce or industry-specific associations often have online forums or groups where members can connect.
5. **Community Forums:** Websites like Reddit or local community forums can also be places where tradespeople discuss job opportunities, share experiences, and seek advice.
6. **Professional Development Workshops:** Look for workshops and training sessions offered by local educational institutions or trade schools. These events often attract tradespeople looking to enhance their skills and network.

British Columbia (BC) faces a notable skilled labour shortage that affects multiple sectors, notably construction and transportation. This issue is fueled by several factors, including an aging workforce as many tradespeople are approaching retirement and a societal preference for university education instead of vocational training trades. Attracting tradespeople for companies like Rocky

Mountaineer in Kamloops can be particularly challenging. Rocky Mountaineer, known for its luxury train journeys through the Canadian Rockies, requires a skilled workforce to maintain its high standards of service and operations. Here are some strategies that could help bridge this gap:

1. **Enhanced recruitment efforts:** Targeting younger demographics through partnerships with local schools and colleges can help. Offering apprenticeships and internships can attract students interested in trades.
2. **Competitive Compensation and Benefits:** Ensuring that competitive wages and benefits can make positions more attractive. Highlighting the unique benefits of working for a renowned company like Rocky Mountaineer can also be a draw.
3. **Work-Life Balance and Perks:** Promoting the lifestyle benefits of living in Kamloops, such as outdoor activities and a lower cost of living compared to larger cities, can be appealing. Additionally, flexible work schedules and other perks can help attract and retain employees.
4. **Training and Development Programs:** Investing in continuous training and development can attract new employees and help retain current ones by providing clear career progression paths.
5. **Marketing and Branding:** Enhancing the company's visibility and reputation as a top employer through marketing campaigns can attract more applicants. Highlighting success stories and testimonials from current employees can also be effective.

By addressing these areas, Rocky Mountaineer can better attract and retain the skilled tradespeople needed to maintain its operations and continue providing exceptional experiences for its passengers.

To fulfill the talent pipeline for tradespeople at Rocky Mountaineer in Kamloops, the following strategies could be utilized:

1. **Partnerships with Local Educational Institutions:** Collaborate with local colleges and trade schools to create apprenticeship and internship programs. This can give students hands-on experience and a clear pathway to employment at Rocky Mountaineer.
2. **Community outreach and job fairs:** Host job fairs and community events to raise awareness about career opportunities. Engaging with the local community can help attract candidates already based in Kamloops.
3. **Employee Referral Programs:** Encourage current employees to refer qualified tradespeople. Offering incentives for successful referrals can help tap into existing networks.
4. **Competitive compensation and benefits:** Ensure that the compensation packages are competitive. Highlighting benefits such as health insurance, retirement plans, and opportunities for career advancement can make positions more attractive.
5. **Training and development programs:** invest in continuous training and development for employees. This not only helps retain current staff but also ensures that they have the necessary skills to meet the job demands.
6. **Diverse Recruitment Channels:** Utilize various recruitment channels, including online job boards, social media, and industry-specific platforms, to reach a broader audience.
7. **Highlighting Company Culture:** Promote the unique aspects of working at Rocky Mountaineer, such as the opportunity to work in a dynamic environment and be part of a team that creates memorable experiences for guests.

Implementing these strategies could help build a robust talent pipeline and ensure that Rocky Mountaineer has the skilled tradespeople needed to maintain its high service standards.

Rocky Mountaineer competes with several renowned train services, benchmarking itself against VIA Rail Canada, AlaskaTrain.com, Golden Eagle Luxury Trains, and Belmond in areas such as routes, onboard experience, service quality, and overall customer satisfaction. Here's a comparative analysis:

VIA Rail Canada

VIA Rail offers extensive routes across Canada, including the iconic "The Canadian," traversing Toronto to Vancouver. In contrast, Rocky Mountaineer focuses on scenic journeys through the Canadian Rockies and the American Southwest, highlighting unique landscapes. While VIA Rail provides a variety of onboard classes, such as Sleeper Plus and Prestige, Rocky Mountaineer is celebrated for its luxurious GoldLeaf and SilverLeaf services, featuring glass-domed coaches and gourmet dining. Both companies are known for excellent service, though Rocky Mountaineer often garners higher praise for its personalized, luxury-focused experience.

AlaskaTrain.com

AlaskaTrain.com specializes in showcasing Alaska's breathtaking scenery through routes like the Denali Star and Coastal Classic. While it emphasizes adventure and comfortable travel, its accommodations are less opulent than Rocky Mountaineer's. Rocky Mountaineer, by contrast, offers distinctively luxurious services focusing on curated scenic routes through the Rockies and the American Southwest. In terms of service quality, Rocky Mountaineer consistently stands out for its high-end amenities and attentive service, appealing to those seeking a more indulgent travel experience.

Golden Eagle Luxury Trains

Golden Eagle Luxury Trains is renowned for its long-haul journeys across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, including the legendary Trans-Siberian route. On the other hand, Rocky Mountaineer specializes in shorter, immersive, scenic day trips in North America. Both companies provide exceptional luxury, but Golden Eagle's appeal lies in its opulent, multi-week expeditions, while Rocky Mountaineer emphasizes panoramic views and daytime travel. Both are highly regarded for their service quality, with Golden Eagle focusing on extended journeys and Rocky Mountaineer excelling in delivering a memorable North American travel experience.

Belmond

Belmond is known for historic luxury train travel, featuring routes like the Venice Simplon-Orient Express and the Andean Explorer. Their journeys include vintage carriages and gourmet dining. In contrast, Rocky Mountaineer offers a modern luxury experience with coaches designed for panoramic views and comfort. While both provide excellent service, Belmond's historic charm offers a unique luxury experience compared to Rocky Mountaineer's scenic routes in North America.

Rocky Mountaineer stands out with its luxurious Canadian Rockies and American Southwest routes, emphasizing panoramic views, curated dining, and high-end service. Each company caters to

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different traveller preferences—VIA Rail for cross-country exploration, AlaskaTrain.com for adventure seekers, Golden Eagle for long-haul opulence, and Belmond for those attracted to historic train journeys. By investigating and utilizing these employer branding strategies,

Rocky Mountaineer can enhance its dedication to attracting workers to Kamloops while fostering innovation and industry partnerships. The insights from implementing these strategies will benefit the organization and improve its understanding of successful employer branding approaches within the tourism industry.

Conclusion

This research proposal examines ways to enhance job opportunities for tradespeople in Kamloops, British Columbia, with Rocky Mountaineer through effective employer branding. Insights gained from these strategies could bolster Rocky Mountaineer's reputation by attracting tradespeople from Kamloops, ensuring a robust, skilled workforce and reinforcing its status as a premier luxury train service in the tourism sector. By identifying limitations in the current branding strategy and suggesting solutions to improve opportunities for tradespeople, this research aims to support Rocky Mountaineer's workforce's sustainable growth and development.

Timetable

ACTIVITY	START DATE	END DATE
Extensive review of tradespeople in Kamloops sources. Arrange proposal outline concerning research gathered	November 28, 2024	December 9, 2024
Examining websites, materials; gathering qualitative research for proposal	November 28, 2024	December 10, 2024
Information will be collected from other organizations in the tourism sector that successfully hire tradespeople	December 9, 2024	December 13, 2024
Analyze case studies of organizations that successfully hired tradespeople, focusing on key strategies and outcomes.	December 9, 2024	December 13, 2024
Writing up of research	December 16, 2024	December 20, 2024

SWOT ANALYSIS: ROCKY MOUNTAINEER BRANDING

	INTERNAL FACTORS	EXTERNAL FACTORS
INTERNAL FACTORS	<p>STRENGTHS +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Established reputation in the tourism and travel industry.+ Strong focus on customer experience and quality service.+ Access to trained and skilled employees in the region.+ Supportive local community and partnerships with local businesses.	<p>WEAKNESSES -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Limited awareness of employer brand among tradespeople.- Potentially higher competition for skilled workers from other industries.- Seasonal nature of business may deter long-term employment.- Limited resources for extensive recruitment marketing.
EXTERNAL FACTORS	<p>OPPORTUNITIES +</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ Growing demand for skilled trades in the tourism sector.+ Collaboration with local trade schools and training programs.+ Increasing interest in sustainable and eco-friendly tourism.+ Potential to enhance online presence and attract diverse talent.	<p>THREATS -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Economic downturns affecting the tourism industry.- Competition from other companies in attracting skilled tradespeople.- Changes in labor laws or regulations impacting hiring practices.- Possible negative perceptions of working conditions in the industry.

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