# Annual Marketing Plan

# Virginia Safari Park

January 2013 to December 2013

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# 1. Executive Summary

Virginia Safari Park is a popular tourist attraction located deep within the Shenandoah Valleys of Natural Bridge, Virginia. We offer a unique, educational experience for individuals of all ages, although we primarily target women and mothers with children. Individuals are provided with the opportunity to observe over 1,000 exotic animals in their natural environment. Guests are also allowed to feed and pet most of these animals throughout their journey, which takes place from the comfort of their own vehicle or from the comfort of a wagon pulled behind a tractor.

Our ultimate goal is to become one of Virginia's leading tourist attractions by increasing both our annual attendance rates along with our annual revenue by 15% over the next five years. By 2017, we want our annual attendance rates to hit a record breaking 172,500 guests, which in turn, will result in an increase in our overall revenue to $3.45 million. We also plan to continue our focus towards public education, customer satisfaction levels, and retaining our existing customer base. Our strategic assets and core competencies provide a solid foundation for us to achieve these goals.

Our current target market consists of women and mothers with children, families, local camps, and local school districts that wish to satisfy an educational or social need. We would like to expand our target market to acquire both baby boomers and tourists along the east coast, which includes the following states: Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida. Considering a large chunk of our customer base comes from women and mothers with children, we believe there is a growth opportunity for our organization if we can accurately target baby boomers within the states that were previously listed.

Other strategies that we have to achieve our goals consist of:

- *Strengthening and broadening our existing collaborator network.* We want to connect with local hot spots in order to help promote our park while also solidifying our trust with our existing collaborators, which include local school districts, local camps, and our two partnering facilities.
- *Managing our employee personnel.* A privately owned facility thrives from the individual success and determination of employee personnel. We want each employee to feel as if they are a valuable asset to our organization in order to prevent high turnover rates.
- *Differentiate our organization from that of our direct and indirect competitors.* Virginia Safari Park is one of many tourist attractions found within Virginia. We want to convince guests that we are an affordable entertainment option. More importantly, we want our guests to feel as if the cost is minimal in comparison to the educational and social opportunities that we have to offer.
- *Increased spending on technological advances.* Returning guests do not want to see the same animals, buildings, and exhibits every time they return. In order for us to be successful, we must also be innovative.
- *Increasing our brand awareness.* Potential guests must be aware of what we have to offer in order to generate interest. We would like to increase our brand

awareness along the east coast to encompass our new target segments, which include baby boomers as well as tourists.

The overall success of our strategies depends on the tactics that cover our marketing mix. These tactics include:

- *Product.* We aim to modify and improve our exhibits along with the procurement of new animals.
- *Service.* We plan to increase our services through keeper demonstrations, which will provide a rich, educational opportunity for guests to interact with several different species.
- *Brand.* New animal feed buckets will promote our organization and they will also increase the appearance of the park. New uniforms will increase the professionalism of both employees and the park in general.
- *Pricing.* Our price is based off of our costs. We charge enough to cover our costs while also monitoring our competitor's prices. In comparison to our competition, we want to charge an affordable price.
- *Incentives.* We are going to implement a new customer loyalty program beginning in January of 2013. This customer loyalty program will promote our park along with our two reciprocal facilities.
- *Communication.* We plan to expend some of our retained earnings on radio advertising. Radio media allows us to reach a large number of individuals at a relatively minimal cost.
- *Distribution.* Our distribution focal point will remain on providing a satisfying service to our guests. Other channels of distribution include animal trading, product distribution (buckets, gift shop items), and supply distribution (animal feed).

The above goals, strategies, and tactics are the preliminary factors that will ultimately determine our success over the next five years. We will modify these marketing activities as necessary in order to achieve our long-term goal of increasing our market share in the United States entertainment industry.

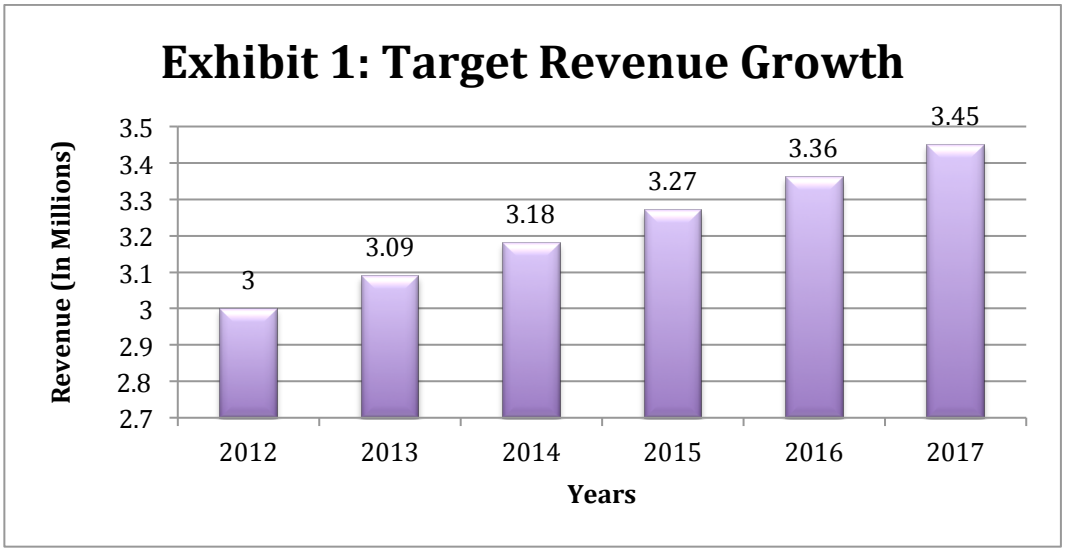
# 2. Situation Analysis

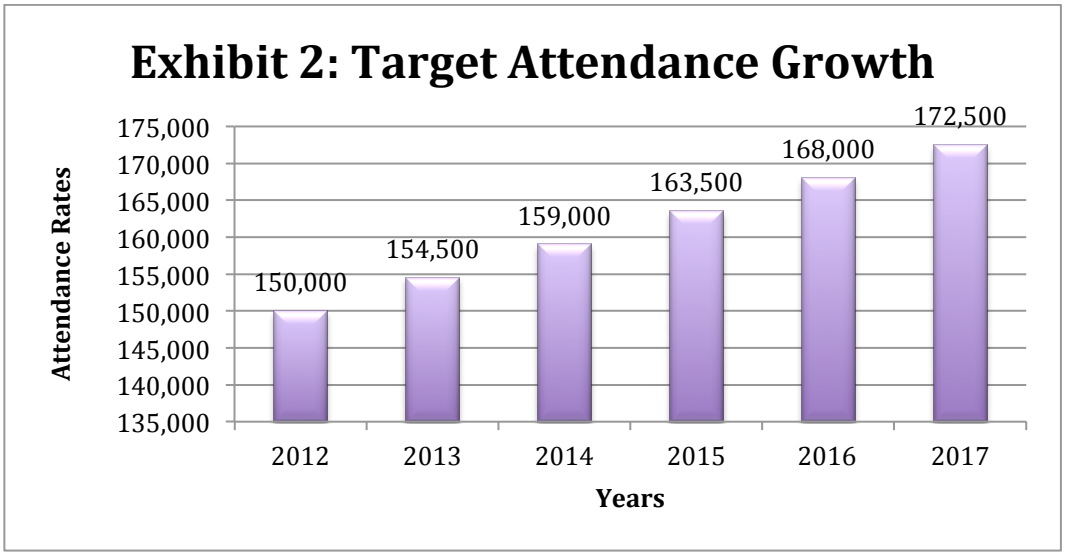
## 2.1. Company Overview

Virginia Safari Park is a 180-acre drive thru safari located on 229 Safari Lane in Natural Bridge, Virginia. The park is privately owned by Eric and Janet Mogensen, which means that they acquire no state funding to maintain their facilities. They opened the gates to the public in spring of 2000, allowing guests from all over the country the opportunity to observe wildlife up close and personal in a natural environment. They are currently home to over 1,000 animals from six different continents. Eric and Janet are also owners of two other facilities. They own Reston Zoo, which is a thirty-acre children's zoo located in Vienna, Virginia and they own Gulf Breeze Zoo, which is a traditional zoo located in Gulf Breeze, Florida.

*2.1.1. Goals and Current Performance*

Our ultimate goal is to become one of Virginia's leading tourist attractions. We plan to increase annual revenues by 15% from $3 million last year to $3.45 million by the end of 2017. We also plan to increase attendance rates by 15% from 150,000 guests last year to 172,500 guests by 2017. Exhibits 1 and 2, found below, provide visual representation of our futuristic growth goals for both annual revenue and annual attendance.




Guests are allowed to either drive their own vehicle or take a wagon ride through a three-mile safari tour. Along these tours, guests are permitted to feed an array of exotic animals as they approach the cars or the wagons. Virginia Safari Park is the only drive-thru safari located in Virginia. In the long run, we hope to continue gaining tourism

market share from competing attractions because of the unique experience that we have to offer in regards to wildlife observation and wildlife interaction.

We have three specific goals that will help us gain market share from competitors. Our most important goal is that of continued public education within our facility. The second goal that we have to focus on is increasing customer satisfaction. An increase in public education and customer satisfaction will help us reach our last goal, which involves increasing sales. While the park has already established a name for itself within the local Virginia communities, we have not been able to accurately target potential customers outside of Virginia. We must also work to increase customer satisfaction levels in order to retain existing customers in hopes that these customers will promote our organization to others.

### *2.1.2. Strategic Assets*

Our goals are attainable through our current assets:

- **Infrastructure:** Although guests have access to 180 drive-thru acres and ten walk-thru acres, the park itself is over 300 acres. We have been making additions to the park for the last few years and we still have plenty of room for expansion to better meet the customer's needs.
- **Collaborator Networks:** Most privately owned zoo facilities are aware of all other similar attractions throughout the country. Since privately owned zoos do not receive state funding, they do a lot of business with each other. The main business-to-business interaction amongst these facilities includes animal trading. This network is relatively small on a national scale. Since the scale is so small, it allows the organizations within it to form more personal and trusting bonds.
- **Human Capital:** Every day is a learning opportunity here. Rarely does anything goes as planned. This allows staff members to engage in active learning while gaining hands on experience, which will ultimately lead to an increase in both productivity and job diversification.
- **Intellectual Property:** We are home to over 1,000 animals from six different continents. Most of our species are proven breeders, meaning that the longevity of our animals is guaranteed through reproduction. Also, Virginia Safari Park owns the property of the facility. Therefore, land ownership rights ensure the security of the property.
- **Brand:** We are unique in the sense that we are the only drive-thru safari located in Virginia. We have also been in business for thirteen years now, which increases the brand recognition of our organization.

- **Customer Base:** We have a large target customer base. We are not limited to one particular market segment. This type of entertainment allows us to reach a large target audience, including single people, couples, families, schools, and camps. Age discrimination is not a factor when it comes to zoos because it directly targets individuals of all ages.

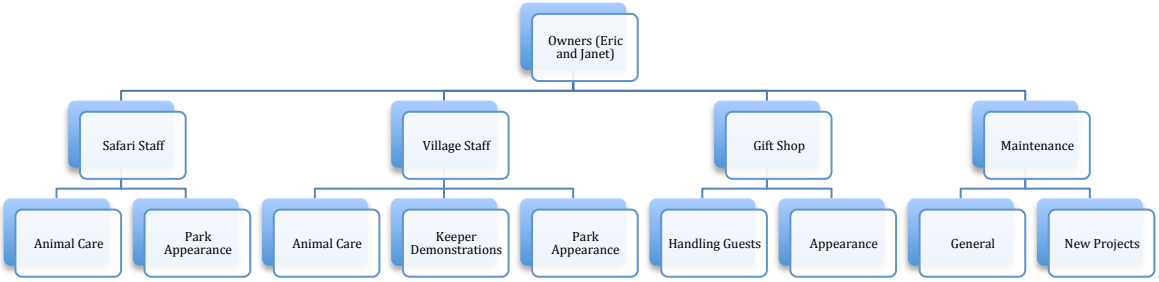
- **Synergistic Offerings:** The park brand and reputation has continued to build because of their coexistence with Reston Zoo and Gulf Breeze Zoo. This connection allows us to satisfy a larger audience.
- **Access to Scarce Resources:** We have a competitive advantage against direct competitors, such as other zoos, because we own two other zoos. Our reciprocal partners serve as two other resource venues. We can trade animals or staff members internally, but we also have more expertise to pull from if necessary. Staff from one facility can share input and benefit our partnering zoos.
- **Access to Capital:** Owning three different facilities increases our ability to access capital. Immediate funding is readily available because we have unlimited access to their revenue sources as well as ours.

*2.1.3. Core Competencies*

We are currently proficient in creating business goals and uncovering strategies to reach these goals. We are constantly making adaptations within the park while also focusing on making improvements within the park. Each new project or service starts with a vision from either staff or management. The amount of time, money, urgency and effort behind the proposed project determines how much collaboration from other staff members is necessary before implementation.

Operationally, we have a small, versatile group of staff members who specialize in a variety of elements. We currently have around thirty employees. Low numbers in regards to staff increases job diversification while also remaining cost efficient. Exhibit 4 displays the types of positions available within the park. Most of the positions found below are cross functional, meaning that an employee classified under one position is likely to engage in other positions at some point throughout their career with us.

## Exhibit 4: Employee Personnel




Rather than hiring extra staff, each employee has the opportunity to engage in different activities when extra help is needed. Certain jobs throughout the year require all staff members to participate, even though it may not be something they have experience with. We are able to do more with less. The individual expertise of each staff member has increased our productivity levels.

We have made several technological changes within the park over the last few years in order to meet customer demands. Each staff member was recently assigned a radio, which allows them to communicate with management and staff throughout the park. This helps us to better monitor guests. It allows the staff to increase productivity because they can receive instant feedback by using the radios. There is no time wasted trying to find someone to ask for help if everyone is required to carry a radio. It also reduces the likelihood of miscommunication between different channels (gift shop, safari staff, village staff, management) within the park, which could lead to unsatisfied guests.

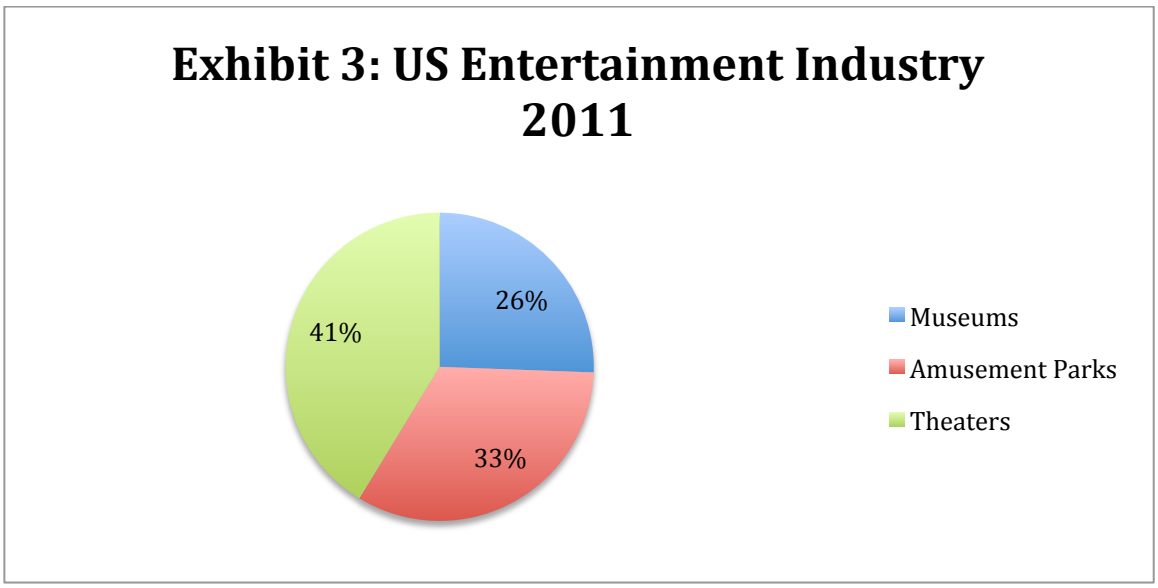
In general, most of the female animals within the park are capable of reproduction. Steady growth in animal numbers has pushed us to adapt and make changes so that we can properly care for all of our animals. We had six giraffes in the beginning of August. In June, we had a male giraffe born and we have another giraffe that is due any day now. The barn was only made for seven giraffe. Therefore, we were forced to expand to properly meet the needs of our animals.

The annual number of customers in 2011 was remarkably higher than it was when we opened in 2000. Private ownership and limited funding in 2000 meant that the essentials were built until revenues allowed for further expansions or additions. There is a 180-acre drive thru section, a gift shop, and a ten-acre walk thru section. The only restrooms for guests are located in the gift shop. This unfortunately led to unsatisfied customers. Sufficient funding over the last few years has allowed us to open a snack bar and restaurant combination in September of this year. We felt this was an important service to offer guests.

## 2.2. Market Overview

### *2.2.1. Customers*

For the purposes of this plan, entertainment sources are composed of amusement parks, museums, and movie theaters. If you add the revenue from each of these sources, the annual entertainment industry is a 34.4 billion dollar industry (Amari, 2012; Kaczanowska, 2012; Samadi, 2012). Keep in mind that number is excluding several other entertainment sources that we could not find accurate information for. In 2011, these particular entertainment revenues in Virginia totaled $432,705,000.80 (Movie, theater, amusement parks, and other). This means that Virginia itself has only 1.3% market share in the United States entertainment industry. Exhibit 3, found on the next page, displays the revenue market share for amusement parks, museums, and movies theaters in the United States entertainment industry.




As you can see, Virginia would hold only a small percentage of the US entertainment industry if it were added to the pie chart, which is why we have shifted our target market to incorporate tourists in surrounding states.

Although individuals have not been spending as much on entertainment sources as they were before the recession, people are still going to expend part of their income on entertainment. The minimum price for an adult ticket into the park is $15, while the maximum price is $20. Compare $15 for an all day ticket at the park to $9.75 for a 2-hour movie at Carmike Cinemas or $33.99 for an all day pass to Kings Dominion. Both of these examples are located in Virginia and they are both indirect competitors of Virginia Safari Park. For just $15 though, adult guests have the ability to observe wildlife in a natural environment, while also learning about roughly thirty-five different species of exotic animals.

The majority of current customers include students, teachers, and local summer camp groups who choose to attend for educational purposes. Another large portion of our revenue comes from individuals and families who are either looking to capitalize on an educational opportunity or they are simply looking to satisfy an entertainment need. Potential customers include baby boomers as well as tourists. These are individuals who may be either local natives of Virginia or they may be newer families who are looking to travel. The area of Virginia where the park is located has a lot of other attractions nearby. Tourists alone, serve as a huge potential segment for us to go after.

Our facility is handicap accessible, meaning that people of all ages can be found amidst the park. Most guests though are either children or women/mothers between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five. The park is located in Natural Bridge, VA, which is apart of Rockbridge County. The average household income for individuals in Rockbridge County is $63,069 while the average household income for those in Virginia is $90,072 (Average Household Income). As of 2012, there were 2,509 females between the ages of

25 and 44 residing in Rockbridge County and 1,113,228 in the state of Virginia (Females 25 to 44 Years). This proves that we have a large market segment to go after.

According to the US Census information, Rockbridge County had a population of 22,307 people. This number was expected to grow by 0.3% in 2011. Virginia itself is home to 8,001,024 people, with expectations of a 1.2% growth in 2011 (U.S. Census Bureau). Rockbridge County alone is very small, but Virginia as a whole ranks as having the 12th largest population of all the states in America (Population in Virginia). It is also important to note that Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida are ranked amongst the top 15 states. All of these states can be found on the east coast and many of our guests are tourists who travel into or through Virginia from these states. This essentially allows us the opportunity to expand our current target market towards these demographics.

Although tourism has decreased over the last few years, many individuals and families still travel or plan to travel once they can afford it. Tourists have the potential to become our most profitable target segment, especially as the economy starts to rebound. We are currently working to extend our target market to surrounding states along the east coast. The park is located right off the highway, which makes it a convenient stop for tourists who may be traveling through Virginia to reach their destination while it is also a convenient option for tourists who decide to vacation in Virginia.

The typical customer lifestyle varies greatly amongst visitors. The experience offered at the park is educational, exhilarating, and affordable to all. A typical family may be below the poverty line or they may be very wealthy. The park has something to offer for individuals categorized within any lifestyle.

Most of our guests are looking to fill either an entertainment need or an educational need when they choose to visit the park. This means that they likely value education, entertainment, or socialization. As previously stated, our primary customers are women or mothers, between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five. Rarely do we have guests that come by themselves to spend the day at the park. Therefore, we emphasize the social aspect that our facility has to offer. This is critical to the growth of our park.

Locals to Rockbridge County and the surrounding areas have proven to be loyal customers thus far. There are fewer entertainment opportunities available in Rockbridge County than there are in Roanoke County, which is adjacent to Rockbridge County. This allows for more frequent purchases from locals. Price sensitivity is also something that we typically do not have to worry about. Since most of our guests are established families composed of mothers and children or tourists who are traveling to the area, they already have secure finances. This means that our $15 fee for adults is considered an affordable option rather than a deterrent.

*2.2.2. Collaborators*

Guests who consider or visit the park have likely heard of the park through their school district, a local camp, their own research on the web, or one of our partnering facilities. Current collaborators were introduced through either the educational needs or the entertainment needs that most of our guests' desire. The schools and camps serve as a way for us to increase our branding, while our partnering facilities work to increase our branding as well as our product development, service development, and distribution. The ability to swap animals with our partnering facilities provides us with the opportunity to increase customer satisfaction needs through the development of new exhibits or displays with these animals.

We would like to collaborate more with other local hot spots around the area. There are many other attractions around Virginia Safari Park, such as historical sites and museums, which we could benefit from. A coupon or some type of customer incentives program would be a viable option. This would serve as free advertising and positive communication between venues if these entities agreed to display park coupons or pamphlets in exchange for us to do the same for them.

*2.2.3. Competitors*

There are direct and indirect competitors to our facility. We currently have six direct competitors, which includes other zoos and animal parks, located within the state. Our main direct competitor would be Natural Bridge Zoological Park because of their location. They are located just three miles down the road. Despite having similar animals, we are two very different parks. They run a smaller, more traditional zoo. While most of their animals are enclosed in exhibits, most of our roam throughout the 180-acre drive-thru section. In this regard, we are able to meet our guest's needs for interaction.

Natural Bridge Zoo is also a cheaper option, but it's important to keep in mind that you pay for what you get. They have one walk-thru section along with a gift shop, while we have a walk-thru section, a drive-thru section, a gift shop, a café, and a picnic shelter. We strive to stay innovative to satisfy our guest's needs. In order to achieve this, we have been steadily adding new animals and buildings to the park. It is important to note that we still have room for expansion and we plan to utilize our extra space through continuous improvements. Natural Bridge Zoo, on the other hand, has limited space for additions and they have also been very stagnant lately when it comes to innovation.

There is low intensity competition when it comes to business with outside sources to procure resources. Our location is so secluded that most of our business purchases are considered straight rebuys. In other words, we purchase materials from the same source every time with little to no research towards other options. Most of our resources, such as park feed, hay, and veterinarian services are distinct with no room for variation. It was difficult enough to find a credible vet who could share insight on thirty-five different species, if necessary. Since our products and services are so specific and in such a secluded location, market competition for resources and supplies is minimal.

In addition to direct competitors, we are faced with indirect competition from other entertainment sources. Our indirect competitors offer very intense competition because they are either cheaper or more convenient. Other attractions in Virginia that affect our market share in the entertainment industry include amusement parks, movie theatres, bowling alleys, museums, historical sites, and sporting events. Entertainment became an unnecessary expenditure that many people reduced after the recession hit in 2008. Many people turned their attention towards parks, hiking, or other free activities in an attempt to counteract their entertainment losses.

Based on our location, I would say that our largest indirect competition stems from free activities in surrounding areas, such as hiking trails, running trails, and local parks. We are located within the Shenandoah Valley, which means that breathtaking scenery can be found just about anywhere nearby. Thus, local free activities may steal some of our potential guests. Although this is a possibility, we don't feel this is a huge threat to us seeing as we have a lot more to offer. Guests can spend the entire day with us at a reasonable price. Trails and parks do not provide the educational opportunities that we do. We offer education along with interaction and entertainment, all for the same price. Guests can also experience two zoos for the price of one since we have both a walk-thru section and a drive-thru section.

As we begin to focus our attention towards tourists, we have to keep in mind that competition is still an important factor. We can't just assume that a tourist who sees our billboard from the highway will want to stop by our facility along the way. Individuals who feel compressed for time may choose a quicker event, such as a museum tour. On the contrary, they may choose not to stop at all.

Competition increases when it comes to tourists. As tourists travel across different states towards their final destination, they have more entertainment options to choose from. Tourists may focus their attention towards North Carolina or New York attractions rather attractions within Virginia. It just depends on what the individual is specifically looking for.

### *2.2.4. Context*

The park has maintained steady economic growth over the last few years despite the lower entertainment expenditures that have followed the recession. We realize that the money supply of many previous or potential guests is not as high as it used to be, but we are still working to meet existing customer demands while also acquiring new customers. We are doing this through consistent technological advances. As previously stated, we have obtained efficient radios, expanded our giraffe barn, and built a brand new concession stand/bathroom combination.

Another recent development was a budgie (bird) aviary that houses 300 birds. Guest are allowed into this aviary where the birds can fly directly by them or even land on them to

feed from sticks, which can be purchased at the gift shop. Other new additions include two female rhinos, a rhino barn to house them, two tigers and four cheetahs, a new building for them, and new registers for checking in guests. Our goal here is for the guests to feel as if they gained more from their experience with us than they had to pay for it. We want it to be worthwhile for them.

Demographic trends show us that population has been slowly increasing in both Rockbridge County and Virginia as a whole. Income levels have also been slowly increasing. As personal income increases, the more they will be willing to spend again on entertainment sources. Also, the larger the population is in surrounding areas, the larger our potential customer base.

Some of our animals, like our white rhinos, are considered endangered species. Endangered species are protected by laws and regulations, which include:

- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)- a treaty that regulates endangered species trading, through permits, in order to protect their survival
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)- the organization who provides the permits necessary in order to import exotic animals into the United States or to export exotic animals from the United States
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)- an inspection organization that enforces rules and regulations regarding these endangered species (U.S. Customs and Border Protection)

The above regulations can make it difficult on us in regards to acquiring new species, which would likely increase the annual attendance rates. The paperwork for each of the above organizations is long and tedious, which can delay or deter us altogether from purchasing certain species. This is difficult for us because it has the potential to limit animal species expansion if we cannot obtain the proper permits.

Another environmental aspect that has the potential to hurt our facility is climate and weather. Weather refers to short-term conditions while climate refers to long-term conditions. There is no denying global warming. Global warming has ultimately affected seasonal weather conditions. Since we are located in a mountainous region of Virginia, we already experience heavy snows and rough winter conditions. This is strenuous on our animals, our staff members, and business in general. We close down from November through the middle of March because we would lose money if the park were paying the full staff to keep the facility operating with low daily attendance rates.

We also experience hot summers filled with spells of heavy rainfall. We were hit with an incredible storm this summer that destroyed our rhino barn, fencing around the park, and several smaller buildings on site. This one storm was taxing on revenues. The entire 300+ acre park was running off of one generator. Had that generator given out, we would have lost even more revenue. The weather is a tremendously important component in the success of our park and it is something that must be considered on every level.

## 2.3. SWOT Analysis

| | Favorable Factors | Unfavorable Factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Internal Factors** | • Infrastructure Growth<br>• Versatile/Diverse Staff<br>• Brand Recognition<br>• Private Zoo Network<br>• Shared Capital Between Three Facilities<br>• Successful Reproduction Rates<br>• Property Rights | • Location<br>• Small Staff Numbers<br>• One-time Customers<br>• Small local population<br>• Permit Accessibility |
| **External Factors** | • Increased Economic Well-Being<br>• Market Population Growth<br>• Market Income Growth<br>• Acquire Other Zoos and Rebuild | • Increased Laws/Regulations<br>• Extreme Weather Conditions<br>• New Direct/Indirect Competition<br>• Decreased Economic Well-Being |

## 2.4. Target Customers

We are going to continue targeting women and mothers with children since they have been such a critical segment of current business operations. They have brought us the most revenue thus far and therefore, it is important for us to continue targeting them. Mothers with children can be considered a sub-component of families, which we will also continue to extend our focus towards. A third range of target customers includes school systems as well as camps.

We would like to enlarge our target customer base to encompass both baby boomers as well as tourists. More specifically, we would like to target traveling baby boomers located within Virginia as well as those located along the east coast. In particular, we will focus on individuals within Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Ohio, New

York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida. A steady growth in revenues enables us to broaden our customer focus base.

Tourists and baby boomers provide the largest opportunity of growth for us. Children and traveling has and always will hold value for Americans. Approximately four million babies are born each year in the United States ("Births and natality," 2012). This number has been increasing steadily over the last few decades. Mothers and their children are a logical target for us to go after considering the recent growth and the growth that is expected to continue.

Also, every child is required to attend school throughout their youth. Schools already generate a large amount of revenue for us. Our goal here would be to raise awareness of our facility to schools and families in surrounding areas. We offer a unique experience that is fun for children. What differentiates us from our competitors is that the kids also have the opportunity to learn while they are having fun.

As previously mentioned, we are also working to focus more of our attention towards tourists. Million of people travel to Virginia or through Virginia each year, whether it is for business, pleasure, or family. Family is a common reason for travel and this is a marketable idea that will always exist. Individuals are always going to want to travel to visit friends or family members. We easily meet the social need for individuals who travel to Virginia and then look for entertainment while they are visiting.

For individuals passing through Virginia, we offer a very unique experience at a convenient location. We are located just off the highway. Tourists travel because they want to experience something that they cannot find where they are from. Feeding exotic animals is not an experience that can be found in most cities or states like bowling alleys or movie theatres can. As we increase the efficiency of our brand awareness, we will be able to target tourists more accurately. We want people traveling through Virginia to recognize us and to add us to their trip schedule as a convenient source of entertainment.

Through continued focus on our original target market and integrated focused concerning baby boomers and tourists, we hope to create a stronger competitive advantage against direct and indirect competition. We want to create value for our customers by fulfilling their educational, entertainment, and social needs. It is a goal of ours for customers to feel as if the costs incurred to enter the park were minimal in comparison to the gains they made throughout their experience with us.

# 3. Goal

## 3.1 Ultimate Goal

Our ultimate goal is to increase our market share so that we are one of Virginia's leading tourist attractions. We had approximately 150,000 guests last year and ended with nearly $3 million in revenue. We intend to increase annual revenues by 15% to roughly $3.45

million and to increase our annual attendance rates by 15% to 172,500 guests. We aim to reach both of these goals within the next five years.

## 3.2 Market Objectives

### *3.2.1. Customer Objectives*

Our main customer objective is to increase customer satisfaction levels amongst current guests. Essentially, we hope to satisfy existing customer's needs, which in turn will lead them to either revisit the park more often or promote our organization to others through word of mouth advertising. While this is hard to quantify directly, we expect to see indirect results through attendance. We would like to see a 3% annual increase in attendance rates each year for the next five years. This would allow us to reach our ultimate goal of 172,500 guests by 2017.

### *3.2.2. Collaborator Objectives*

We would like to strengthen our collaborative network among school districts within Virginia in order to increase annual visits from large school groups (on fieldtrips). Our goal is to acquire business with 80% of Virginia's school districts. School groups already generate a large portion of revenue for us, but they have the potential to bring in a substantially larger amount of revenue. In addition, we would like to increase the frequency of visits from each district by 15%.

We also plan to broaden our collaborative network by connecting with local hot spots within a 100-mile radius of the park through an incentives program. Rockbridge County is home to many historical landmarks and museums as well as other similar attractions. A connection with some of these attractions would increase our advertising without incurring much expense. Our goal here is to have a Virginia Safari Park coupon on display near check-in or checkout locations. As a trade-off, we would do the same for them.

### *3.2.3. Company Objectives*

A company-specific objective is to increase educational opportunities within the park for guests. We currently have "keeper talks" throughout the day. A keeper talk is a five to fifteen minute presentation where an employee educates interested guests about a certain animal. We would like to increase the effectiveness of these presentations by turning them into demonstrations, rather than just presentations. Our customers value interaction over that of simply listening. We hope that increasing the effectiveness of these opportunities will result in an enhanced experience for our guests.

### *3.2.4. Competitor Objectives*

Our main competitor objective is to differentiate our organization from competitors through promotion of the educational and social aspect offered to guests. We plan to

continue making technological advances within the park to ensure unique experience for our guests. We are currently working towards procuring two male rhinos to accompany our two female rhinos. We are also working towards acquiring penguins. Although this will require us to obtain several different permits, the payoff could be enormous considering that we would be the only facility of this type within the state to have penguins.

Another competitor objective that we plan to focus on is that of differentiating the park based on price. A day at the park is exclusive in the sense we are the only drive-thru safari, which allows guests to fully interact with most of our animals. We are not your traditional zoo with all of our animals enclosed in their exhibits. Guests actually have the opportunity to feed or pet our animals from the luxury or their own vehicle during our drive-thru section of the park for only $15. It is important for us to emphasize how reasonable our price is compared to that of our competitors who may offer a 2-hour museum tour for $40 a person.

# 4. Strategy

## 4.1. Target Market

### *4.1.1. Customers*

Our current target market is women and mothers with children, families, local camps, and local school districts that wish to satisfy an educational or social need. Right now, we are primarily focused on these segments within state of Virginia. We have yet to expand our target market because of our previous priorities. We elected to grow our business and to establish our organization as a credible facility first. We then decided to increase our brand through a variety of technical advances.

Now that we have secured finances, a well-established facility, and increased brand awareness, we would like to expand the focus of our target market to traveling baby boomers. Baby boomers include women of various income levels between the ages of 25 and 44. More specifically, we plan to extend our efforts to baby boomers along most of the east coast (Georgia, South Carolina, Ohio, New York, New jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida). These women will also typically value a family-oriented lifestyle.

The recent recession has helped us realize the effect that price has had on our customers. Most people now question the value of what they are receiving in return for their money. As we extend our target market to baby boomers, we plan to increase our focus on price. We are working to become more price oriented in order to promote our organization as an affordable option compared to that of our competitors.

### *4.1.2. Collaborators*

Our collaborators driven by communication consist of local school districts, local camps, and our two partnering facilities. We expect our school and camp guests to connect with

other schools or camps and promote our facility as (1) an educational opportunity for the kids to learn, (2) a social opportunity for them to bond with others, and (3) an affordable option to all. We also expect our partnering facilities to indirectly boost our sales through advertising within their facility. As more individuals discover where we are and what we have to offer, the more likely they will either visit or tell their friends or family who will visit.

*4.1.3. Company*

We have no stakeholders since we are a privately owned entity. Instead, we rely on our small employee personnel base. Our employees deliver a stable foundation for our day-to-day operations. This foundation further allows us to improve the overall park in order to better satisfy our customer's needs. It is critical for us to maintain our staff considering that we have so few employees for such a large operation. Each employee directly influences the success of the park and therefore, we must collaborate with them to preserve their commitment within the organization.

*4.1.4. Competitors*

Our competitors include traditional sources of entertainment, such as movie theatres, bowling alleys, amusement parks, museums, historical sites, and sporting events. Our target customer may see several of these options as either cheaper or more convenient for their current lifestyle. Competitors also include zoos or animals parks in surrounding regions. In Virginia alone, we directly compete with Leesburg Animal Park, Luray Zoo, Virginia Zoo, Richmond Metro Zoo, Mill Mountain Zoological Park, and Natural Bridge Zoological Park.

As guests consider their options, they base their final decision on convenience, price, and opportunity. An individual who values convenience may choose to go see a movie while a guest looking to capitalize on an opportunity may choose to visit our park. This is why it is critical for us to differentiate our organization from that of our competitors. We want our target customers to feel that the opportunities within our park are worth the price they pay, while also convincing them that we are a convenient option, even if they must travel to reach us.

*4.1.5. Context*

We are currently on the rebound from an economic recession. The recession had drastic effects on many families nationwide, which resulted in decreased expenditures on entertainment spending. This forced us to become more innovative. We had to find a way to convince interested individuals that our facility was still an affordable source of entertainment.

In order for us to achieve this, we increased spending on technological advances within the park. We began expanding the park through additional animals and the creation of new exhibits and buildings. We felt it was important for us to make continuous

improvements in order for potential guests to perceive our park as an affordable, entertainment option. Our goal here was to offer individuals more while charging them the same price.

As we continue to add new animals to the park, it is important to note that we are regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The laws and regulations of these organizations place limitations and time constraints on our ability to obtain new species. We have spent several years now already trying to add a penguin exhibit to our facility. These particular organizations have made it extremely difficult on us thus far due to their strict protocols.

One particular physical aspect that affects our animal selection is the weather. Temperatures range from 107° in the summer to -13° in the winter. We must carefully select animals based on their ability to adapt to versatile conditions. Harsh weather is not uncommon either. We faced heavy rainfall and strong storm with 80+ mph winds in summer 2012, which resulted in large amounts of destroyed property. We are also faced with heavy snowfall each winter. We adapt to customer's desires through the procurement of new animals if and only if we can ensure the safety of that particular animal in all types of weather conditions.

## 4.2. Value Proposition

### *4.2.1. Customer Value*

#### *4.2.1.1. Value Proposition*

Virginia Safari Park is truly a unique experience with numerous benefits to offer. These benefits include:

- *Education:* We have over 1,000 animals from six different continents. These animals are split between two different sections: a 3.5-mile drive-thru section and a 10-acre walk-thru section. A brochure discussing the animals throughout the drive-thru section is provided to all guests. There are both signs and keepers available throughout the walk-thru section, which provide information on the types of animals that we have.
- *Socialization:* Most customers attend as a group, whether that is with their family, friends, school, or camp. Guests tend to collaborate amongst each other regarding their own personal experience. It is a chance for individuals to break out of their comfort zone and bond with others while enjoying wildlife in a natural setting.
- *Entertainment:* It is not every day that you are provided with the chance to feed a giraffe from your hand. Our park brings the wildlife of Africa to the mountains of Virginia. Depending on the day and the season, guests have the opportunity to witness a birth first hand. Not many people can say that they have seen a bison calf being born in person.

- *Interaction:* The 3.5-mile drive-thru section allows guests to hand feed an array of exotic animals from the comfort of their own vehicle or from the leisure of a wagon ride. Our customers not only get to see our animals up close and personal, but they are also allowed to feed and touch them along the way. Customer interaction normally adds to the enjoyment of their experience.

*4.2.1.2. Positioning Statement*

Virginia Safari Park is the best entertainment venue for women and mothers between the ages of 25 and 44 because it provides their kids with quality opportunities to learn, socialize, and interact with a variety of species.

*4.2.2. Collaborator Value*

*4.2.2.1. Value Proposition*

Our success thus far is beneficial for to our collaborators, which include local school districts, local camps, and our two partnering facilities:

*Local School Districts and Local Camps:*

- *Easy-going and stress-free learning experience:* The organizational aspect of our operations and the commitment of our staff members allow us to provide a more relaxed experience for that of our larger school groups and camps.
- *Lenient and special environment:* Large groups of screaming kids can be a lot to handle. Our facility is quite large and this gives these groups the freedom to move about as they please, at the pace they desire. Rarely is the park ever too crowded to enjoy.
- *Timing flexibility:* There is no set time in which groups must enter or leave the park (other than closing time). This allows group leaders to spend more time in some areas while spending less time in others. They can set their own schedule according to the interests of their group.

*Partnering Facilities:*

- *Increased Awareness:* Our brochures advertise both Gulf Breeze Zoo and Reston Zoo. We do this as an inspiration for our guests to spread the word about our partnering facilities to their friends and family members who may be near these two areas.
- *Increased Attendance Rates:* We hope that the increased awareness results in increased attendance rates amongst our three zoos. If guests have a positive experience at Virginia Safari Park, we hope they will also take the opportunity to visit one of our partnering facilities at some point.
- *Increased Profits:* An increase in attendance rates will likely result in higher profit margins for these facilities. High profit margins will help them to expand their operations, acquire new animals, or increase salaries.
- *Easier access to resources and capital:* They have immediate access to capital if they need it to cover an initial investment for a new project. They also have the

ability to learn through us as well as each other because our staff is so tight knit. Essentially, we have more expertise available when making critical decisions. They also have relatively easy access to our animals if they wish to trade with us to create a new exhibit.

*4.2.2.2. Positioning Statement*

Our organization is an established tourist attraction that benefits local schools and local camps by providing them with a relatively stress free learning experience. Our partnering facilities benefit through increased profits and direct access to resources and capital.

*4.2.3. Company Value*

*4.2.3.1. Employee Value Proposition*

Virginia Safari Park has grown each year since it opened in 2000. Revenue exceeded $3 million in 2011. Our recent and anticipated improvements along with our increased brand awareness forecasts continued growth over the next few years. This growth will result in more funding for raises in salaries. It will also provide our employees with more paid training opportunities, which will allow them to further diversify themselves in this field of work. Diversification and prior experience is critical to the success of an individual who wishes to excel in this type of career.

*4.2.3.2. Employee Positioning Statement*

Virginia Safari Park is a well-endowed option for our employees because our continued success will provide favorable results in regards to their salary, training opportunities, and individual growth.

# 5. Tactics

## 5.1. Product

There are two main sections within the park that guests have access to:

- *Drive-thru Safari:* The drive-thru section of the park is considered home for most of our larger animals. They are also classified as herbivores, meaning they primarily consume grass or leaves along with the park grain that the guests feed them. These animals consist of:
    - *Birds:* Ostrich, Emu, Rheas
    - *Mammals:* Fallow Deer, Japanese Sika Deer, Axis Deer, Père David's Deer, Rocky Mountain Elk, Dromedary Camels, Bactrian Camels, Llamas, Giraffe, Bongo, Addra Gazelle, Scimitar Horned Oryx, Arabian Oryx, Eland, Blackbuck, Wildebeest, Nilgai, Yak, Bison, Water Buffalo, Scotch Highland Cattle, Watusi, Vietnamese Pot-Bellied Pigs, Grant's Zebra, Grevy's Zebra

The drive-thru safari is a 3.5-mile drive where guests can not only observe wildlife in a natural environment, up close and personal, but they can also feed most of the animals throughout their drive. Guests can choose whether they would like to experience this opportunity from the comfort of their own vehicle or from one of our wagons, which are pulled by tractors. The main difference between your own vehicle and the wagon option is the fact that a tour guide drives each wagon. These tour guides can further educate guests about the animals and the rest of our facility throughout their journey.

This is our guest's opportunity to interact with our animals. Guests can go at their own pace, feeding whichever animals they want to feed, and simply observing those that they may not. They are allowed to drive through the park as many times as they wish throughout the day. If guests choose the wagon tour option, it will be an hour long. After these tours, guests are then permitted to drive their own vehicle through the park again as many times as they wish. The drive-thru section is a great chance for our guests to learn, socialize, interact, and observe our wildlife in a natural environment. Once a customer pays their way into the park, their ticket is good for the remainder of the day. This allows them the ability to eat lunch outside the park and then return later in the day if they so desire.

- *Walk-thru Village:* We also have a 10-acre walk-thru section of our park, also known as the Safari Village. The Village appears as more of a traditional zoo, which is where you will found our smaller and medium-sized animals. Throughout the village, we have:
    - *Reptiles:* Burmese Pythons, Ball Pythons, Corn Snakes, Rattlesnakes, Blue-tongued Skink, a Red Tegu, a Water Monitor, Spotted Skunk, Tortoises
    - *Birds:* Plum-headed Parakeets, Blue-eared Pheasants, Andean Condor, Chickens, Rosellas, Guinea, Traditional Blue Peafowl, African Crowned Cranes, Lorikeets
        - *Bird Aviary:* Flamingo, Lady Amherst Pheasant, Lace Neck Dove, Australian Crested Dove, Temmnick Tragopan, Scarlet Ibis, Sacred Ibis, Ducks
    - *Primates:* Common Marmoset, Budgies, Lemurs, Golden-Headed Lion Tamarins, Red-Handed Tamarins, Brown-Headed Spider Monkeys, Debrazza's Monkeys, Squirrel Monkeys
    - *Mammals:* Binturong, Kangaroo, Warthogs
        - *Petting Barn:* Pygmy Goats, Boer Goats, Vietnamese Pot-Bellied Pigs
    - *Cats:* Servals, Cheetahs, Tigers

All of our exhibits are close to the pathways, which lets our guest get an up close view of them. This section also allows our guests to go at their own pace. There are two to four keepers spread out throughout this 10-acre section at any given time incase guests have questions, comments, or concerns. Customer interaction

here is crucial. We want the presence of our staff to be known so that customers can visualize our commitment to these animals.

There are still chances for interaction between our guests and our animals throughout the Village section, although it is not as much as our Safari section. There is chance that some of our kangaroos will be sprawled out on the guest pathway as they walk around, which is their opportunity to pet a kangaroo. There is also a Petting Barn located in the Village, which is where guests can feed and pet a few different animals. The main benefits from the Village section again include educational opportunities, socialization, entertainment, and interaction.

## 5.2. Service

We offer a variety of services to our guests, which include:

- *Wagon Tours:* This is an hour long guided tour where guests don't have to worry about their vehicle getting scratched or animal feed being scattered throughout their car. Tractors pull all of our wagons. Our guides are responsible for educating the guests throughout their hour-long journey. Guests feed from these wagons and this is their opportunity to ask any questions that they may have regarding our animals, the surrounding area, or our facility.
- *Private Tours:* There are special circumstances where we allow for private tours. This comes with an additional fee, as it has the potential for us to lose other customers throughout their visit.
- *Keeper Talks:* During our busy season (summer), we have keepers give 5-15 minute presentations throughout the day on our most popular animals. This allows for a more in-depth explanation and understanding about our animals.
- *Snake Demonstrations:* We also have snake demonstrations throughout summer where our guests can pet whichever snake we choose to bring out. Again, interaction is critical in the guest's experience. Interaction provides a twist, which makes it more enjoyable for most people.
- *Creature Features:* Large groups, mainly school or camp groups, have the option to purchase a "creature feature" presentation for after their wagon tours. A keeper gives a 2 minute presentation about one of our reptiles, asks the kids if they have any questions, and then gives them the chance to pet the reptile if they wish to do so. This is both educational and interactive for the kids.
- *Safari Trading Post/Gift Shop:* The gift shop is equipped with gifts, souvenirs, beverages, snacks, ice cream, and disposable cameras. We also offer animal feed and wagon ticket rides here. Restrooms are located behind our gift shop as well.
- *Watering Hole Café:* This is our most recent addition to the park and it is located within the Village walk-thru section. The watering hole café offers our guests a place to enjoy a peaceful lunch, grab a quick snack or drink, and hit the restroom.
- *Budgie Feedings:* Guests can purchase a "budgie stick" for $1 from our gift shop as they check in for the day. They can then take this stick into our budgie aviary, which is home to almost 300 budgies. Most guests seem to really enjoy this because the budgies are roaming freely and they can fly right by their faces. The

purpose of a budgie stick is for the guests to hold them out for a budgie to come eat from their stick.

- *Giraffe Feedings:* Guests can purchase our specialty giraffe grain for just $0.50. The guests can then take this feed to our giraffe feeding station, where they can hand feed one of our seven giraffes.

In January 2013, we are going to integrate a new service into our daily operations:

- *Keeper Demonstrations:* Most of our guests are children. In order to keep the children engaged throughout their visit, we have trained two employees to partake in daily keeper demonstrations with some of our most popular Village animals. These animals include:
    - Spider Monkeys
    - Squirrel Monkeys
    - Reptiles
    - Kangaroos
    - Goats
    - Pot-Bellied Pigs
    - Bottle Raised Babies (Ex. Camels, Giraffe, Llama, Goats)
- The enjoyment level increases significantly for guests who can learn and interact with an animal rather than listening to a keeper talk about animals that are enclosed in exhibits. We hope this improves our customer satisfaction levels.

## 5.3. Brand

We are known for our unique drive-thru safari experience. This alone has allowed us to build our brand recognition and our brand awareness. The name was carefully selected in order to reduce confusion from potential customers. We wanted people to understand who we were and what we had to offer based on our name.

Our collaborators have done a tremendous job promoting our facility thus far. The awareness generated through these venues has also allowed us to continue to build our brand recognition with limited advertising expenditures. We have differentiated ourselves from our competitors considering that we are the only drive-thru safari located in Virginia.

In January 2013, we plan to introduce several new tactics to increase our branding:

- *New animal feed bucket:* Our current buckets store three pounds of feed and are plain white. We are going to add the logos of all three facilities to the buckets in order to increase the brand awareness of each of our facilities. There is information regarding our three facilities in each pamphlet. Unfortunately, many guests overlook this information and this reduces our advertising efforts. Since most guests purchase at least one bucket of animal feed, this serves as a chance for us to more effectively increase our brand awareness. This will benefit our park as well as our partnering parks.
- *New employee uniforms:* We would like to increase our professionalism through acquiring new employee uniforms. There is currently a lot of flexibility for our

staff members when it comes to their attire. Sometimes our staff members are hard to identify. We are going to supply our employees with 5 t-shirts, 5 long sleeve shirts, 5 sweatshirts, 5 pairs of shorts, and 5 pairs of khakis. Also, our current uniforms only have the name of the park on them. Each new uniform will have the park name as well as the park logo. We want guests to associate our name with its logo while also increasing the professionalism of the park.

- *Radio Advertising:* We currently do not engage in much advertising. Recent profit increase has allowed us to expand our advertising efforts from word-of-mouth and billboards. Since we are targeting traveling baby boomers, we plan to engage in radio advertising throughout Virginia and along the east coast. Radio advertising will allow us to reach a large number of individuals in a large radius for a relatively cheap price.

## 5.4. Pricing

We use a combination between cost-based pricing and competitor-based pricing. We focus on the margins we need to achieve in order to remain profitable, while we also focus on the prices charged by our direct competitors (other zoos or animal parks). We first look at their prices and see what they have to offer. We then compare that to our products and services before establishing a price that we feel is reasonable and allows us to achieve our desired margins.

**Admission Rates**

| Age | General Admission | Wagon Admission | Season Pass |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Child (2 yrs and younger)** | FREE | FREE | N/A |
| **Child (3-12 yrs)** | $10 | $15 | $30 |
| **Adult (13-64 yrs)** | $15 | $20 | $40 |
| **Senior (65+ yrs)** | $14 | $19 | N/A |

*Active Military Discount: FREE bucket animal feed ($3 value)
* Rockbridge Resident Discount: $2 off each paid admission

**Additional Expenses**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Animal Feed** | $3 per bucket or $10 for 4 buckets |
| **Specialty Giraffe Feed** | $0.50 per handful |
| **Budgie Stick** | $1.00 per stick |

* Guests should bring extra money for gifts, souvenirs, drinks, and food

## 5.5. Incentives

Current customer and collaborator incentives include:

- *Group Discounts:* Groups with 15 or more people receive $1 off per person. This group discount is beneficial for our school groups as well as our camp groups seeing as many of these groups exceed 15 people.

- *Annual Passes:* For a one-time fee, guests can purchase an annual pass. These passes are also valid at our reciprocal zoos (Gulf Breeze Zoo and Reston Zoo). This has helped spread awareness of our other zoos while also boosting their attendance rates. Locals in Gulf Breeze or Reston may also purchase an annual pass, which is valid at Virginia Safari Park.
- *Periodic Contests:* We hold photo contests throughout the year where winners receive a prize in return. Prizes vary from season passes to t-shirts to stuffed animals.

Starting in January 2013, we would like to introduce a new customer loyalty program. For guests who have validation of visiting all three parks in the same year, whether they have a season pass or not, will be provided with a FREE season pass for the following year. These guests will also be equipped with a free Virginia Safari Park t-shirt.

Our company personnel have incentives as well:

- *Health benefits:* Every full-time employee is required to take a 3-month review. If they pass this 3-month review, they are switched over to salary, which comes with health benefits.
- *Raises:* Our employees are required to complete a series of reviews. There is a 3-month review, a 6-month review, a year review, and a two-year review. Their knowledge base is expected to increase incrementally. If they pass, they automatically receive a raise. Their results determine how their raise.
- *Training and management possibilities:* The employees' work ethic, experience, and results regulate their positional rankings. As employees progress, they are offered training opportunities at other facilities nationwide if we feel that it will benefit their performance here at the park. Our staff members have the ability to move up into management positions as they acquire the necessary experience.

## 5.6. Communication

### *5.6.1. Consumer Communications*

In order for us to reach our consumers, we use two different approaches. We use both a push strategy and a pull strategy. A push strategy occurs when we take our products or services directly to our potential customers. A pull strategy occurs when we can motivate our potential customers to pursue our organization. For example, we currently have several billboards located along the highway that most individuals must travel on in order to get to the park. We hope that potential customers see these billboards as they travel, research the, and then later come visit our park. We are trying to "pull" people in.

We would like to increase our consumer communication efforts. We plan to increase our efforts in March of 2013, just before our busiest season (summer). Consumer communication improvements include:

- *Radio Advertising:* We realize that we need to increase our advertising efforts in order to reach our intended target customer base, which now includes traveling baby boomers along the east coast. Television ads were

ruled out due to their overall expense. Instead, we opted to go with radio advertising because we can reach a large number of people, spanning across several different states, for a relatively low price. Radio advertising will serve as another pull strategy for us.

- *Promotional Materials:* There are several other popular tourist attractions near Virginia Safari Park. We would like to have either our brochures or a coupon on display somewhere in these attractions. In return, we will do offer the same for them. We also want to focus these efforts on surrounding hotspots (grocery stores, popular restaurants). Displaying a promotional coupon at checkout locations would serve as a push strategy because we are bringing our incentive directly to the potential customer.

*5.6.2. Collaborator Communications*

Our collaborators include schools, camps, and our partnering zoos. We do our best to effectively communicate with them considering they are one of the driving forces behind the success of our organization. All of our collaborators can learn about the park directly or indirectly.

- *Directly:* They have the ability to call us with questions or concerns regarding their upcoming visit. They could also meet face-to-face with us to go over what we have to offer them, determining prices, or scheduling a day. We are here to serve them.
- *Indirectly:* Collaborators also have the option of researching us online or obtaining word-of-mouth reviews from other groups that have previously visited the park.

*5.6.3. Personnel Communications*

Communication between employee personnel is absolutely essential. Most of our staff is entrusted to work independently as they complete their daily tasks. There is no one looking over them or following up behind them everyday to ensure responsibilities are being completed. Also, staff member's responsibilities might switch depending on the day. If two people are assigned the same task on two separate days, then these two individuals must collaborate with each other in order to make sure nothing is overlooked.

Personnel communication becomes even more critical when it comes to the animals and their health. Miscommunication here could result in the death of an animal, which is not acceptable under any circumstances. Personnel must work together across the different sections of the park to ensure responsibilities are being completed efficiently and accurately.

Staff members follow a management hierarchy system. A different manager oversees each section of the park (drive-thru safari, walk-thru village, gift shop). These managers report to his/her manager, which is also referred to as the general curator. The general curator is defined as an individual who supervises all of the park's animals as well as all of the park's employees. The general curator reports to the owner.

## 5.7. Distribution

*5.7.1. Consumer Distribution*

We distribute a service to our guests. We offer them a unique and gratifying experience comprised of opportunities, which include entertainment, education, socialization, and interaction.

*5.7.2. Collaborator Distribution*

Virginia Safari Park is the largest of the three zoos. Therefore, we do the most distribution. This involves, but is not limited to, animal distribution, product distribution (buckets, gift shop items), and supply distribution (animal feed, medicinal supplies). Distribution is an important element between our three zoos in order to keep them operating efficiently. One key aspect to note about our distribution process is that it is typically not constant. We distribute supplies and materials, as they are needed.

*5.7.3. Personnel Distribution*

Our personnel are exceptionally important to us and therefore, we distribute ongoing training to them in order to improve their overall success here at the park. As a smaller, privately owned facility, we try to cut costs by increasing our on internal operations. For example, we train our staff to treat sick or injured animals rather than bringing in a veterinarian every time.

# 6. Implementation

## 6.1. Infrastructure

We provide a unique and educational service to our guests. Despite our small staff, we aim to enhance individual experiences by expending more focus on our guests. As previously mentioned, we are going to shift our focus towards keeper demonstrations in January of 2013. This tactic serves as an educational opportunity that allows for customer interaction as well.

In order to really differentiate ourselves from our competitors, we have chosen to focus more on our brand. The new uniforms of our staff members will increase our professionalism, which will increase our branding. We also plan to increase customer awareness of our facility through radio advertising and a new animal feed bucket. These brand modifications will be completed by our staff members rather than relying on external help. We place a lot of emphasis on our employee personnel base because they are the core behind the infrastructure of our facility.

### 6.2. Processes

Increasing our market share to become one of Virginia's leading tourist attractions is achievable through:

- *Increasing our customer satisfaction levels.* Without guests, we have no business. They are the key to our success. Our keeper demonstrations and our new loyalty program are two tactics that are specifically directed towards our customers.
- *Strengthening and broadening our collaborative networks.* A strong connection with our collaborators can only increase our branding. Our collaborators also serve as an opportunity for us to learn and grow through the knowledge they have to offer.
- *Increasing educational opportunities within the park.* Keeper demonstrations are an interactive learning environment for our guests. The more engaged they are with us, the more likely they will want to learn. This will ultimately enhance their overall experience.
- *Differentiating our organization from our competitors.* New uniforms and new animal feed buckets will help distinguish us from our competitors. We want to look professional while also approachable. New buckets should enhance the attractiveness of our facility.
- *Continued technological advances at the park.* We want our returning guests to be able to observe the growth of our facility with each visit. Technological advances, such as the procurement of new animals or the addition of buildings to our facility, are observable changes that will likely satisfy our guests.

### 6.3. Schedule

We would like to increase our market share over the next five years. More specifically, we would like to increase our annual attendance rates by 15% from 150,000 guests in 2011 to 172,500 guests in 2017. We would also like to increase our annual revenues by 15% from $3 million in 2011 to $3.45 million by 2017.

We plan to achieve these goals by making several different changes within the park. In January of 2013, we plan to introduce keeper demonstrations, new animal feed buckets, and a new customer loyalty program. In March of 2013, we plan to implement radio advertising. Radio advertising is slightly delayed so as to target our customers just before our peak season, which is summer.

## 7. Control

### 7.1. Performance Evaluation

Financial stability is going to be critical as we begin to make these changes throughout the park. We want to see positive results rather than negative results, which is why it is

going to be imperative that we continue to monitor our financial standing. We plan to monitor the performance of our modifications over the next five years through:

- *Annual attendance rates.*
- *Annual profit and revenue.*
- *Number of season passes administered each year.*
- *Number of animal feed buckets ordered each year.*

## 7.2. Environmental Analysis

Abrupt environment changes could drastically impact the success of our organization. Therefore, it is critical for us to monitor the environment on a daily basis. We plan to do this by:

- *Monitoring our economic standing.*
- *Monitoring entertainment expenditures.*
- *Review the laws and regulations administered by CITES, FWS, and the USDA.*
- *Follow our competitors to oversee any major changes that could potentially hurt our growth.*
- *Review our target market demographics.*
- *Monitor weather and climate conditions.*
- *Persistent research in the development of new exhibits and animal procurement.*

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